

A QUEER LITTLE PRINCESS



FRANCES EATON

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THE LITTLE PRINCESS DANCES IN THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT TREES.—*Page 18.*

A QUEER LITTLE PRINCESS

AND HER FRIENDS

BY

FRANCES EATON

(*Sargent Flint*)

Illustrated by L. J. Bridgman

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A QUEER LITTLE PRINCESS

AND HER FRIENDS

CHAPTER I.

MISS MINERVA GOES AWAY.

"It may make a great difference to the child in the future," said Miss Minerva stiffly, as she jammed a huge silver cup, a porringer, and spoon, all marked "Minerva Longstreet," into a beautiful case. Then she snapped the spring spitefully, and bent her fierce eyes on the faded face of the grandmother who sat on the other side of the table.

"The child will be very well provided for without your assistance, Cousin," said the grandmother gently, but not without pride.

"I have no doubt the child will have enough to eat," returned Miss Minerva; "but to throw away a fortune for a whim!"

"You will go up and see her, Cousin?"

"No, I shall not! I have no desire whatever to see the child — not the slightest desire."

"I proposed putting your name first," said the grandmother, tapping the table with her thin fingers, "but Mary said the baby should not be named with a thought of money."

At the mention of the baby's dead mother, Miss Minerva's

eyes softened. She said nothing for a moment, and then, as if angry with herself for her momentary gentleness, she exclaimed,—

“It is just here! just here! Two old women wanted to name the child—don’t deny it!” as the grandmother started to speak; “nothing but vanity, I suppose, but a vanity I could afford better than you.”

“Why so, Cousin?”

“Can I not, if I will, give the child a fortune for every letter in my hideous old name? Can you do that, Henrietta Nelson?”

Henrietta Nelson was obliged to acknowledge that she could not.

“Henrietta—Minerva—Longstreet—Nelson,” repeated Miss Minerva slowly. “Do you imagine you can ever raise a child with such a name—and no mother!”

“We shall hope, and pray for it,” said the grandmother softly.

Miss Minerva arose, grasped the great bag which held the rejected silver, and, without a word of adieu, left the house.

In walking down the broad avenue from the old house to the gate, she found herself trying to imagine how the baby looked. “Of course it is as black as a little monkey,” she muttered to herself; “who ever saw a Nelson who wasn’t black?” Then she recalled Mary, the baby’s dead mother, with her great blue eyes and fair face, and she turned and looked up at the chamber windows, where she knew the baby was, but seeing the grandmother watching her, she turned hastily, and, still grasping tightly the bag of silver, with head erect, she passed out the tall iron gate.

Just outside she met a pretty little woman dragging a baby in a small willow wagon. As she passed the child looked up into her dark face and laughed. Miss Minerva looked down into his

merry brown eyes and stopped, with her hand on the wagon. "I like the looks of your baby," she said suddenly; "will you give him to me?" Her strong hand had stopped the little wagon.

"Give him to you!" exclaimed the mother, raising eyes as brown as the baby's, if not as merry, to Miss Minerva's hawk-like gaze.

"Sell him, if you like that better. It seems a pity, if with more than a half-million of dollars I can't buy a baby, as plenty as they seem to be."

"It would take more money than that to buy mine," said the woman.

"Let us talk with a little sense," said Miss Minerva. "You are poor, are you not?"

"I suppose I am," admitted the mother cheerfully.

"When the boy grows up he will need many things you cannot give him."

"Perhaps he will."

"Of course he will," said Miss Minerva in a positive way. "No matter why, but I want to adopt a child. I will take yours. I would rather have a girl with blue eyes, but that's a whim. Let me have your baby and he shall grow up a gentleman; I will educate him, and probably leave him a fortune when I die."

The mother's eyes glistened at this astonishing proposal. They grew larger and larger, as if, with one glance, she was trying to take in the whole future of her child. But the glitter of ambition faded, and the softer light of love filled her whole face, as she replaced the white sun-bonnet which had fallen from the baby's head, and said softly, "God did not mean for him to be rich, or he would not have given him to me. He knew I had — nothing."

"Then you will not let me have him? You are acting very selfishly."

"Oh! you are not in earnest," said the woman, laughing.

"Not in earnest!" said Miss Minerva indignantly, "come and see. I will go now, this minute, and have the papers made out — adoption papers."

The mother clutched the little wagon, and the color began to fade from her lips, as if she feared by some word, unconsciously spoken, she had bound herself to this tall, strange woman.

Miss Minerva laughed, and took her hand from the wagon. The boy's mother looked at her closely.

"Are you not selfish, too, lady?" she asked.

"But this is a selfishness that you cannot afford," replied Miss Minerva.

The woman shook her head: "No, I cannot give him up. He is better off with me than with anybody."

"Take him along, then," said Miss Minerva.

"Poor thing!" said the mother, as the tall figure was lost to sight, "perhaps she has lost children and her head ain't just right."

Miss Minerva returned to the city, and for many days they looked for her return at the great house; but she did not come.

"Mr. Nelson," said the pale grandmother a few days after to her husband, "do you imagine Cousin Minerva will never look at the baby?"

"I should not anticipate any such rudeness," said the grandfather, pushing his gold-bowed spectacles back against his stiff white hair, and looking pompously at his wife.

"I heard in town to-day," said Jack Nelson, the baby's father, "that Cousin Minerva was going to France to stay some time."

"O, Jack ! she wouldn't go without seeing the baby," said the old lady.

"If I had had my way, her frightful old name would not have gone in anywhere."

"It was a great disappointment to her, my son," said the grandmother mildly.

"I am sorry, mother ; Cousin Minerva was kind to my Mary ; I — I cannot forget that ; but six pounds of baby was hardly enough to name for a war goddess."

"But you managed to get the name in where it would not be worth anything," said the grandfather.

"It is just as Mary wanted it ; that is enough," said Jack.

"Women never know — the value — of money," said the grandfather. He raised his stiff white eyebrows at every pause, perhaps to give his listeners time to fully comprehend his meaning. "Money — will do — everything."

"It could not save my baby her mother," said Jack, walking to the window where the nurse sat holding the baby in the morning sunshine.

"Sometimes money can do very little, I am sure," said the grandmother.

A few days later Miss Minerva stood gazing gloomily through a port-hole of a steamer, just starting for France. A sullen darkness had fallen over her native shores, as if they too would look indifferent, and throw after her no loving glances to call her back, or a God-speed if she must go on. She looked up at the black clouds and down at the blacker water. "No one cares that I am leaving," she muttered, "and why should they ? If Mary had lived, or had named her baby for me — but she named it for poor

old Henrietta, who will die and leave nothing behind but a string of gold beads and a sampler! And because she is her grandmother, the girl will wear the old beads and cry over the sampler.

"I have enough to buy the whole family of that old woman in the next state-room, and yet I could hardly count the people who cried when they said good-by to her. Nobody cried for me—bah!"

Perhaps Miss Minerva muttered these words to the clouds, for at that moment they dashed down a few drops of rain against the port-hole; they rolled slowly, like tears, down the glass, and one drop started from Miss Minerva's eye. But before it dared roll far she wiped it away in so positive a manner that no more dared to follow.

CHAPTER II.

MISS MINERVA RETURNS.

MORE than six years had gone since Miss Minerva stalked out through the great gate with the bag of silver. She had travelled far in these few years, passing restlessly from one spot to another; but ever with a memory of her native land, dearer than any other, in her strange old heart.

Now she had returned—suddenly and without notice, as she went. When she came in sight of the great gate, she began to think less bitterly of all in the old house than when she left them.

A neat-looking woman was walking outside the high hedge. Miss Minerva walked up to her and said, “Do you belong here?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said the woman respectfully.

“Is Mary’s baby alive?” Miss Minerva could not ask the question indifferently.

“Mrs. Nelson’s baby?” suggested the woman politely. “She is just inside the gate, now; but she is no baby; she is going on towards seven years. I am her nurse.”

“Why are you outside the gate, then?” said Miss Minerva sternly.

“We are playing, ma’am.”

“And some one might carry her off while you are out here.”

“No, they couldn’t,” said the woman; “the gate couldn’t open

but I'd hear it, and no one could get over the hedge ; it is too high."

" What do they call her ? " asked Miss Minerva, in a tone which showed she had not wholly overcome her weakness on that subject.

" Her own name was so long and so ugly," said the nurse, laughing,— " just like a princess' name always is — and she was so fine and pretty, even when I first came to her and she a mite of a baby, that I called her ' little princess ' ; and then her father took it up, and then her grandmother, and then everybody."

" I want to see her," said Miss Minerva abruptly. " Take me where I can see her without her seeing me."

" We can go through the little gate down yonder," the nurse suggested. " She will not see us ; she is under the trees in the avenue."

" What is your name ? " asked Miss Minerva.

" Jane Barton, ma'am."

" I will follow you, Jane."

Jane led the way, and Miss Minerva followed her through the little gate and across the broad lawn, until they came to a small clump of pine-trees in sight of the avenue. Here they sat down, and the nurse, with a condescending smile, pointed down the broad avenue.

There was the " little princess," dancing in the shadow of the great trees. Her hat lay upon the ground beside her, and her yellow hair waved gently, in time to the dancing of her little feet.

A small boy with a round, torn cap and patched clothes, had come up to the gate and stood looking through at her. When she saw him she did not stop dancing, but beckoned for him to come in. He had a merry, careless face, and when she beckoned, he

laughed, and tried to push open the heavy gate ; failing to do this, he tossed his shabby cap over and began climbing the high gate.

With admiration and awe, the princess watched him climb : with fear she saw him balance himself a moment on the high railing, and with a scream of mingled delight and terror, she saw him turn a somersault and alight near the torn cap safely, on his little bare feet.

" Did you hurt you, Dicky ? " she asked anxiously. He shook his head scornfully.

" I was dancing under the trees ; will you waltz with me ? " holding out her hand to him.

" I never went to waltzing-school," said he, grinding his bare toes into the gravel, " but I can turn a hand spring while you waltz." And wholly unconscious of the eyes that watched them, the princess began to dance, while the boy turned one hand spring after another in quick succession in a circle around her.

The nurse had started up, perhaps to send the boy away, but Miss Minerva held her back, saying, " Let them alone."

" That is lovely ! " said the princess, clapping her little white hands. " Jane told me about the little boy at the circus, and I am sure you ought to be a circus boy."

He confided to her that he fully intended to do so when his grandmother died.

" When people die, you don't see them any more," said the princess seriously.

The blithe look faded from his face ; the little ragged suit which before had looked simply reckless, appeared melancholy now, as he raised his brown eyes, and said, " I know that : my mother is dead ; I shall never see her again."

From the moment he came in the gate, Miss Minerva had tried to recall the time and place she had seen his face before. Now that sorrow looked out of his brown eyes, it brought back, not his own little face, to her memory, but that of his mother, when, more than six years before, she had refused to part with him just outside the great gate.

"My mother is in Heaven, too," said the princess, going so near the boy that the embroidery of her spotless dress touched his ragged clothes, "but she will always stay near the gate till I go. Isn't that nice?"

"Who told you so?" as if the authority might make some difference.

"O'Hara told me."

"I like Miss O'Hara," said the boy, "but all Irish women tell lies."

"I don't think O'Hara does," said the princess gently.

"What right has O'Hara to talk that way to the child?" said Miss Minerva fiercely.

"No great harm for a cook that has kept her place near twenty years, to tell a child her mother is in Heaven waiting for her," said Jane warmly.

"Well, well," said Miss Minerva, "I don't blame you for defending O'Hara. Now go into the house and tell them I am coming. I will look out for the child. Do you know who I am, Jane?" as the woman turned to leave her.

"I take it you are Miss Minerva."

"And why?" asked Miss Minerva, with a grim smile.

"I — I have heard them speak of you often. I am sure you are Miss Minerva."

"If you are sure, it would be useless to contradict you."

Jane stopped a moment, with a questioning look, then with a laugh that admitted no doubt, ran toward the house.

Miss Minerva walked quickly toward the children. "What is your name?" she asked, holding out her hand to the little girl.

The princess took her hand, still holding the boy by the other, and said, "Princess Nelson."

"What does your grandmother call you?" asked Miss Minerva, not without feeling a little ashamed of herself.

"Only Princess."

"Doesn't she call you Henrietta sometimes?"

"No. That is her name. Papa calls me 'Royal Highness' sometimes."

A gratified look stole into Miss Minerva's face; if the child had not borne her name, it was a pleasure to know she had borne nobody's else.

"I have been watching your Royal Highness dance; I used to dance under these very trees when I was a little girl."

"I would like to see you do it now!" said the small hero of the hand springs, with a significant look at Miss Minerva's tall, ungraceful figure.

"Did you ever live here?" asked the princess quickly, trying to cover Dicky's impoliteness.

"No; but I came here very often to see your grandmother; we were very good friends, and cousins beside."

The princess clapped her hands. "Oh! you are Cousin Minerva. You have come back at last, and have looked at me, without knowing it. Let us go tell Grandmamma."

The lonely woman took the eager little hand held out to her,

and started for the great house, wondering how she could have staid so long away from her native land. The bluest skies she had ever seen were forgotten when she looked into the princess' eyes; and she could recall no music sweeter than her silvery voice.

The boy, unnoticed, if not wholly forgotten, picked up his cap, replaced it on his curly head, and began to slowly climb the gate. There was no resentment in his little heart toward the princess; for he was wholly untutored in etiquette; instead, he felt almost grateful to her, for, as he climbed, he could not help thinking of another gate, where, perhaps, a loving, well-remembered face was patiently waiting for him.

Miss Minerva was happy. She was pleased that the child had heard of her, and had guessed who she was; but her pleasant thoughts were interrupted by a practical question from Her Royal Highness. "Have you brought your money with you?" she asked, stopping suddenly.

Miss Minerva dropped the small hand which she held, and scowled frightfully.

"You have not lost it, have you?" cried the princess, mistaking her agitation.

"No; I have not lost it, but must I buy my little cousin's love?" said Miss Minerva, with a pathos she would not have shown to any one else in the world.

"I don't sell my love," said the princess, laughing, "but you have so much money, I thought you would buy Dicky some new clothes, and a circus horse."

"That impudent little fellow down by the gate?" said Miss Minerva, recovering her good-nature.

"He isn't a bad boy, only he can't help being funny," said the child earnestly; "he is going to be a circus boy sometime."

Miss Minerva was about to make some remark not wholly complimentary to the profession Dicky had chosen, but they had reached the front door, where the grandmother was just coming out, with outstretched hands and tearful eyes. "We thought you were never coming home, Cousin."

"Pshaw!" said Miss Minerva, as she grasped the thin hands of the grandmother. "You knew well enough I would not die out of America."

CHAPTER III.

THE PRINCESS FINDS THERE IS SORROW IN THE WORLD.

THE summer was flying by, like a merry day spent by the sea ; and still Miss Minerva staid at the great house.

Sometimes the old impatience and unrest would look out of her eager eyes, and the grandmother would fret in her heart, for fear she would go away again ; but the sight of the little princess always brought back a satisfied look, if no more.

One warm day the princess sat in the long parlor, looking at pictures ; it was the same table at which Miss Minerva had once sat, with the bag of silver, and refused even to look at "the baby."

It may have been the remembrance of this — for Miss Minerva never forgot anything — that caused the oddest of smiles to come to her face as she walked to the table and closed the book the princess held. "Here is a present for you," she said. "It was made for a real princess, and I have waited patiently for you to grow to it."

The princess turned, and saw in Miss Minerva's hand a beautiful box, with narrow silver bands in place of a cover, which seemed to hold back from the wind, a tiny lace dress so fine that spiders might swell with envy at the sight of it.

The princess' eyes grew bright, for she loved dainty things.

"It took years to make it, Your Royal Highness," said Miss Minerva, "but you may wear it out in a week, if you wish."

"You will make her vain and selfish," said the grandmother, as she saw the princess dressed in the lace, flying like a white butterfly down the stairs, toward the kitchen, where O'Hara sat at dinner, balancing a knifeful of potato on the way to her mouth, and at the same time entertaining a slow-looking coachman and a pretty chambermaid, with her ideas of "naygurs," both as servants and citizens.

"See my new dress!" cried the princess, alighting on the back of her chair.

"It's loike yerself," said the cook, looking over her shoulder at the child, as an old hen might look at a humming-bird.

"Cousin Minerva bought it for me in Europe; it was made for a truly princess, and it took years and years to make it, and I may wear it out in a week, if I want to."

"Well may they say to yees that it took years and years!" said O'Hara, shaking her great head at the little princess. "It's often I've heard of them laces. Katy O'Hern was made blind in the ould country, an' not on so fine work as that, nayther. There's sorra in that, choidl!"

"My mother," said Joanna the chambermaid, "knew a woman once who made lace that long that she made it just as well in her sleep as when she was awake."

"There's many a hundred oie worked into that," said the cook solemnly, lifting a piece of the dress in her hand.

The princess listened with eyes dilated with horror. Visions of blind women, women overworked so they knew no rest, but in their sleep continued labor; visions of countless eyes destroyed for

her, crowded her brain, that until now had held only pleasant impressions. She covered her ears, and with a piercing scream ran from the kitchen.

"Shame on you!" said Jane; "you have frightened her. Did you see how white her face was? She is never to know there is any trouble in the world."

The smile of pleasure had hardly faded from Miss Minerva's face; she was still thinking of the little princess in her royal dress, when the scream reached her ears.

"It is Princess!" said the grandmother, with her pale face raised to Miss Minerva; "she must be hurt. I never heard her scream before."

"I will go," said Miss Minerva, with a look that would have raised even Miss O'Hara's hair, could she have seen it. "The child is more frightened than hurt." She had only reached the door, when the princess rushed into the room. She held out her arms imploringly toward Miss Minerva.

"Take it off! take it off!" she cried; "it hurts me."

"What hurts you, my darling?" said the grandmother tenderly.

"Nothing shall be allowed to hurt you, my dear," said the grandfather, coming in at that moment, then, seeing Jane's frightened face at the door, he added, "Go tell Thomas to go immediately for Dr. Grey. If Dr. Grey is out, go for somebody else, and have him here directly."

Jane flew to Thomas, and he flew for Dr. Grey. As he reached the gate he saw young Dr. Freshhopes driving by; he stopped him, and the doctor turned and drove rapidly up to the house.

When he went in to see his little patient, he had no idea of the nature of her illness. He opened the door where Jane had left

Bridoman



MISS MINERVA TAKES OFF THE UNFORTUNATE DRESS.

him, and there within he saw the princess standing in the middle of the room, with Miss Minerva on her knees before her, taking off the unfortunate dress. The child's face was still pale, and tears stood in her great blue eyes.

The grandfather came forward, and said he would be pleased to have Dr. Freshhopes' advice, until Dr. Grey arrived. His white hair stood up stiffer than usual at being obliged to bow to so inexperienced a physician, and his gold spectacles, which were pushed above his forehead, appeared like a delicate, but firm railing that prevented any rash hair, if one there might be, from nodding too familiarly to the young doctor.

But Dr. Freshhopes' eyes were bent upon his little patient. He had no time to waste on pompous old gentlemen unless they were sick. He went to the princess, and, taking her hand, said gently, "What is the matter, little one?"

"She is only frightened a little," said Miss Minerva, but her eyes flashed as she told the doctor all she knew.

"And did the dress really hurt you?" said the doctor, looking curiously at the child. "Where did it hurt you?"

"Here," said the princess, laying her small hand on her heart.

The dress lay unheeded at her feet, but when she said this, Miss Minerva threw it on the table, and it fell beyond on the floor.

"Don't throw it away," said the princess; "if it is true, all about the poor women, I want to know it; but I thought you would say that it wasn't true." She looked appealingly at Miss Minerva and then at her grandmother.

Her little heart had not been learning gradually that there is sorrow in the world. She knew that Dicky was poor, but he was happy, and had never shown any sign of being overworked. He

turned hand springs under the great trees, and O'Hara gave him tarts at the back door. The birds sang for him as sweetly as for her; the great sun shone, and an old cap is better than a new one for catching butterflies.

The princess lived with old-fashioned people, who had always had enough of everything, and thought very little about other people. She knew nothing of the great world beyond the iron gate. Her father had forbidden Jane's telling her anything disagreeable, so the stories of the poor lace-workers were the first tales of the world's sorrows she had ever heard.

"What should you call the difficulty?" asked the old gentleman, thinking it about time, for even a young doctor, to give the malady a name.

"I should call it a clear case of sympathy," said the doctor, with a pleasant smile.

The grandfather looked at him, as an owl might gaze at a too ambitious robin; then turning toward his wife without a smile, he said, "I never heard of that in our family before."

"It is not necessarily hereditary," said Miss Minerva, who had greatly recovered her spirits as the color returned to her little cousin's face.

"Not at all! not at all!" said the doctor.

Seeing them laughing, the princess began to think there was something merry still left in life, and although the lace-workers were not forgotten, the vividness of their sorrows was fast fading from her mind.

"I am sorry I screamed so; it was very silly," she said, with a smile and a sigh.

"Poor little girl!" said the doctor to Miss Minerva as he went

away. "It would not do for her to know of all the sorrow there is in the world. The child should go about more, and play with other children."

"I shall send for Dr. Grey to-night," said the grandfather; "this young man evidently did not know what to give her."

The rest of the day Miss Minerva and the grandmother tried to keep the princess amused and happy; and when it came bed-time they hoped she had forgotten the tales of the kitchen. Miss Minerva decided that it was all nonsense to send for Dr. Grey, and make the child believe she was sick, when nothing in the world was the matter. She would tell her a few stories after she was in bed, that would be worth all the medicine in Dr. Grey's box; and the father and grandfather listened with pleasure to the peals of laughter produced by Miss Minerva's treatment.

After the stories were told and her prayers said, the grandmother and cousin sat down one on each side of the little bed; and it seemed as if any dream, however bold or daring, would be frightened away if it attempted to pass Miss Minerva's side, and was there anything the gentle grandmother could not persuade to depart?

Yet in spite of all this, after the echoes of laughter died away, a thoughtful look fell on the child's face, and she said, "When I was spelling words the other day, Cousin, you gave me 'preserve' to spell, and then you gave me 'sorrow'; and so I thought sorrow was something good to eat. O'Hara says it is in my lace dress."

"It would hardly be called a sweetmeat, Your Royal Highness," said Miss Minerva.

"Do people have it if they don't make lace?"

Miss Minerva thought a moment, wishing to make the child understand that sorrow was something very far from her little life,

so she said, "Poor people have sorrow, you know, because — because" — they are cold and hungry, she was going to say, but the princess' tender heart was looking out of her great eyes, so she changed it and said — "well, they don't have much money."

"Count all the people in the world that have sorrow, how many would it make, Cousin Minerva?"

"Oh! hundreds and hundreds, maybe," said Miss Minerva.

"And you have hundreds and hundreds of dollars," said the princess.

"My money would go a very little way over the whole world, Your Royal Highness."

"I wouldn't care to be only as rich as you are."

"You will feel differently when you are a young lady."

"I doubt it, Cousin," said the grandmother, with a smile.

"Then you don't care anything about money?" said Miss Minerva.

"No," said the princess, almost sadly.

"I shall not give you the money, then, I was going to offer you, to buy Dick a new suit of clothes."

"I think you would buy a better suit than I could. I will let you get them," said the princess, with a mischievous smile. "Will you? To-morrow!"

"If I don't throw all my money away to-night, because I have so little."

In a few minutes the princess was asleep, and Miss Minerva went down-stairs; but the grandmother still sat there, watching the sleeping child, and as she bent over her, the old lady breathed a hasty prayer as the princess' lips moved, and, in a dreamy whisper, she spelled "s-o-r-r-o-w."

CHAPTER IV.

POOR GRANNY.

ONE warm afternoon in the early autumn, Dick sat in his grandmother's humble kitchen, giving the finishing touches to a small red putty lion. Before him lay a small geography, open at a lesson on Africa.

"Ginger! but if I had putty enough, I'd make you a lion, Granny, that would scare you to death."

"It's a shame ye can't have it," said his grandmother, with great warmth, considering the doubtful benefit a larger-sized lion would be to her.

"Granny!" He put the red lion down on the chair before him, and looked earnestly into the wrinkled face.

"I'm listenin' to ye, dearie."

"Did I ever steal anything, do you think?"

"Steal! did ye say steal, boy?" dropping the well-worn little trousers, to which she was adding another patch, then, as she saw a merry look in his face, she said, "Tell me if ye ever did, for I'll leave the breeches just as they be, for ye'll never need"—

"What, Granny?" as she paused.

"Well, dearie, I would not leave enough of ye to need anything. I don't think your father could be counted among the good of the earth, but he never stole."

"But he went to California," said Dick doubtfully, picking up the lion.

"And what do ye know ag'in Californy?"

"Do good men go there?"

"If ye would be larnin' out of yer geography, instead of huntin' picters of wild beasts, ye'd know more of furrin lands." This was said with more dignity than Dick enjoyed.

"Are you mad with me, Granny? I didn't steal yet, and I will learn the geography. I will do what you want me to—say, which you rather have me be—a circus man, or a gravestone maker?"

He had thrown aside book and putty, and when Miss Minerva looked in at the window, she wished she could make a picture of the humble little room—so bare, so empty, yet so full; with its tiny stove, that seemed almost apologizing for eating anything at all, the small cupboard with its buttoned door, that seemed to be closed, rather to hide its poverty, than protect its contents; the small wooden shelf by the chimney, ornamented with dough and putty heads and animals; and the old woman, looking as if she might be great-grandmother to the child standing beside her, with nothing to take the place of the little trousers she was re-patching, and bending his fresh, merry face close to her wrinkled cheek, and asking, "Are you mad with me, Granny?"

Miss Minerva was no artist, but as she left the window with a hasty step, to knock at the door, she stored the picture in a niche of her imagination—that gallery which God has given us all, and which is ever hung with pictures of pleasure and of pain, ever filling, yet never full. Then she safely locked it there, and gave Memory the key. As her loud knock echoed through the small

house, there was a laugh and a slight scrabble, and when she went in, the child had disappeared.

"Where is Dick?" she asked, laying down a large bundle, with a picture of a too well-dressed boy upon the wrapper.

"He was out of his trousers, ma'am. He saw ye go by the winder. He's not been up to mischief, I hope," said the old woman.

"Then he does go into mischief sometimes?" said Miss Minerva. A curly head appeared at the bedroom door, and Dick walked out, the new patch exhibiting a vitality that threatened destruction to the old cloth.

"I knew you would come," he said, walking up to the visitor without embarrassment.

"How did you know?"

"Because you said you would."

"You believe what people tell you, do you?"

"I believe you, for the princess said you never told a lie."

"The princess flatters those she fancies," said Miss Minerva. "She even told me you were a very good boy, and has sent you a present."

Dick's face flushed. "I have made her a lion; I wanted her to have a big one, but I couldn't get putty enough." He handed Miss Minerva the lion he had just made. She took it, and, after looking at it for a long time, she fixed her sharp eyes on his flushed face, and said, "Who helped you to make this?"

"I looked at the geography," he said.

"How much do you know about geography?"

Dick hung his head.

"Wasn't I tellin' ye, dearie, that larnin' the lessons was more than makin' the putty beasts?" said his grandmother gently.

"I don't like to study; I hate books!" said Dick defiantly.

"What can you ever expect to be, when you are a man, if you don't study now?" said Miss Minerva severely.

He was going to mention circus rider, but something in Miss Minerva's face made him say instead, "I could make gravestones."

"And suppose I left word for you to make one for me—cherubs to be carved on the top, and instead you worked in a pair of cupids? Do you know the difference between a cupid and a cherub?" said Miss Minerva sharply.

Dick shook his head, and wished he had run his risks with the circus rider.

"What put the gravestuns into your head, dearie?" said his grandmother, wishing Miss Minerva would not keep her keen eyes on his little red face.

"The man at the stone yard said I could get rich when I was a man, carving stone."

"Study would be only a waste of time, I suppose," said Miss Minerva. "Well, I will give you an order to-day. You shall make me a small sphinx; but you must not look in any book, or ask any one about it but ignorant people who know nothing of books; and when the little sphinx is done, bring it to me, and if I think it at all resembles one, I will give you five dollars for it. But, remember, no books. Now I want you to sit down and listen to what I have to say."

He took a stool and sat down beside his grandmother. Never had her old face looked so kind to him as now. Miss Minerva took a chair and sat before them. "My little cousin has made me promise to do something for Dick." She looked from the puzzled face of the boy, who was working over a snarl of words in his

brain, trying to get at sphinx, to the grandmother who began to hope much for her "dearie." "I shall do a great deal, or nothing; it is my way." The old woman's face brightened. "I want him to stay with me one month on trial; then if there is really anything in him, I shall take him to bring up."

The grandmother folded her hands meekly, and the piteous look that fell on her old face touched Miss Minerva more than the look of horror which stared out at her, years before, from the eyes of the boy's mother. "I have had a hard life, ma'am," she said, "an' I have laid it, for the most part, to havin' no good start; 'tain't reason that I shall stay much longer — but I won't stand in the way of him; I won't hender his gettin' a fair start. He's a good boy, ma'am," laying her hand tenderly on the brown curly pate beside her, "and barrin' his hatin' books, and makin' fun, he's never wearyin'; and the kindest little creeter if a body's sick — but I won't stand in his way; he'll be gettin' a good start in life — a good start in life!"

"Would you like to live with me, Dick?" said Miss Minerva. "With the princess and me?"

Dick thought of the great house, the broad avenue, the tall trees, and the little princess; he would be near her all the time, just as if he were her brother; he would ride and play, perhaps study with her; his shoes would be bright like hers, and he would not have to climb the gate, but it would open for him. How the thoughts rushed through his brain! Ah! how much he would like to live with the princess! But he turned suddenly toward Miss Minerva, as if he missed from this pleasant dream something he could not do without. "But where will Granny be?" he whispered.

"Ye can't forget yer granny," cried the old woman; "but she will not stand in the way."

Miss Minerva arose, and handing the bundle to the grandmother, said, "There are two suits, and Dick may have his choice; some shoes and a hat will come to-night." Then turning to the boy, she added, "You may come to see me to-morrow," and left the house.

Before she had turned the corner Dick was nearly into a suit of the new clothes. "How do you like that?" he said, placing his chubby thumb and finger on the last button of the jacket.

The old woman smiled at him fondly. "And ye will have a fine start in life;" then suddenly she held out her trembling hands to him, and sobbed, "but ye have a long life before ye, dearie; don't start till yer granny's gone!"

Slowly the new clothes came off, and he donned again the humble jacket, and the trousers with the new patch; and sitting on the stool at her feet, he laid his head in her lap. "Are you crying because you thought I was going to live with Miss Minerva? Would I leave you to stay alone nights, do you s'pose? I shall keep the clothes, for she is rich — awful rich; and the princess sent them; and, don't you see, you won't have to make any now. Ain't that jolly, hey, Granny?" as the tears still ran down her cheeks.

"Dearie," she said, bending over him, "what did ye mean by the stealin'? Was ye only hectorin' me?"

"I am thinking 'bout stealing some putty," said he coolly.

"Have ye had it on yer mind long, dearie?"

"Well, putty long," he said slyly.

"Yer couldn't take it when ye first took to thinkin' on't?"

"N-no."

" Maybe ye think ye could do it after thinkin' awhile 'bout it."

" I must."

She arose, went into the bedroom, and, returning in a few minutes, placed a small box in his hand.

" What's this, Granny?"

" Take it, dearie."

He opened it and found within two small gold coins, carefully folded in white paper.

" I was to keep it till ye needed something sorely, yer mother said; often it lay in my mind that I must take it to buy bread for ye, but, God knows, dearie, I never thought to buy yer honesty!"

He was more touched by her tears than her words, because he understood them better.

" Why, Granny, all the fellers steal putty! but I won't if you don't want me to; I wouldn't steal anything worth counting, but putty and green apples, and all that—why, Granny, what you talking 'bout? All the fellers do that. Save this for the Fourth of July," refolding the paper over the gold, " or to go to California, now we know good folks go there." Then tenderly closing her old fingers over the box, he said softly, " Now, Granny, tell a feller 'bout your hard life."

" When a journey's nigh over, dearie, what's the sense of countin' the stones yer jolted over in gettin' there?"

" Oh! tell a feller;" and as the twilight grew deeper, the old woman sat and recalled for the eager little voyager just starting out, the joys and sorrows of her humble life.

Occasionally he patted her hand at some trying event, to prove his sympathy; and once, at a particularly exasperating

incident, he sprang to his feet, and exclaimed, "But I would not have stood it!"

For a long time they sat very still after the story was told, and Dick thought she must be sleeping, but she finally aroused herself and said, "But ye will have a fine start, dearie, for yer granny will never stand in yer way."

CHAPTER V.

DICK STANDS BY HIS GRANNY.

"Is it to-morrow?" called a gay voice from the gate, to Miss Minerva and the princess, who were walking down the avenue. The princess looked up and saw Dick's round face looking at them.

"To-morrow never comes," said Miss Minerva.

"This is yesterday's to-morrow," said Her Royal Highness, "so you may come in."

Miss Minerva pushed open the gate, and Dick walked in. He was carefully dressed in new clothes, from hat to boots.

Miss Minerva sat down under the trees, which were already putting on their fall suits, although their red leaves looked hot, the princess thought, in the warm October sun.

Dick sat down beside Miss Minerva, trying to appear unconscious of his new glories; but he only sat a few minutes before he jumped up, and, with a comical flash of defiance from his brown eyes at some imaginary master of ceremony, stood before her, saying, "I never felt so big before in all my life! I have had lots of times, new jackets, and then new pants, then new stockings, then new shoes, and then a new cap, but I never before got them all at a shot! 'Twasn't Granny's fault, don't you think, for I wore out the jacket before she could make pants, and so on and on; and I mustn't let her think I like these better'n hers, so I run down the

pockets before I came away ; and I tell you they ain't much side of Granny's pockets."

Miss Minerva smiled. Then she said, " Well, Dick, have you come to stay with me, and be a gentleman ? "

" I can't come," he said.

" Not come ! " cried the princess, " why not, Dicky ? "

Miss Minerva sat watching him, but said nothing.

" I thought I couldn't come yesterday ; but now I know I can't."

" Why not ? " asked the princess sadly.

" First place, Granny is sick ; she can't get up ; but " —

" Well, out with it ! " said Miss Minerva.

" I dreamed my mother wouldn't let me," he said, looking bravely into Miss Minerva's eyes, which softened a little as she said, " Nonsense, child ! "

" Oh ! I did," he said earnestly ; " I dreamed she was in the bedroom, and she said, ' Be good to Granny, Dick ; ' and I said, ' You want me to stand by Granny, don't you, mother ? ' I was following her out of the room, when Granny woke me up."

" You think, then, you must not leave your grandmother," said Miss Minerva, " and will not come even for a short time ? "

The soft wind seemed to whisper through the tall trees, " Come, come ! " and the princess' eyes were looking at him entreatingly.

" Can't," he said, shutting his handsome mouth firmly.

" Won't you come for a week ? " asked the princess.

" She feels pretty sick."

" It's mean to tease you to stay, but you will come when she gets well ? " said the princess.

" Yes; and I wish I could stay now ; but I said I would come right back. She is in bed, waiting, all alone."

He turned to go, and Miss Minerva said, taking him by the hand, "I don't think any the less of you, Master Dick, for standing by your grandmother." The princess nodded her approval.

"Don't you?" he said joyfully; "now I was afraid you wouldn't like it."

After the gate was closed, he looked back and said to Miss Minerva, "What was it you wanted me to make you? I have tried and tried to remember."

"Only a sphinx," she answered, as if he were quite likely to meet a model on his way home.

"I never shall forget it again," he said, as he turned and ran quickly away.

"I told them I was going to stand by you, Granny," he said, as he came in where his grandmother lay alone. "Miss Minerva wasn't half as mad as I thought she'd be 'bout it. She said she didn't think any less of me. First I thought she'd be just awful high, because I wouldn't almost die to go." He threw the new cap upon the bed, and sat down beside her.

She looked mournfully at his bright face.

"Say, what you keep looking at me so for, Granny? Why don't you talk to me? Do you feel any worse?" Then as she still looked at him with a mournful earnestness he could not understand, he said, bending over her pale face, "Can't you speak, Granny? Shall I run for the doctor?"

Still she looked at him without moving. He took her cold hand in his warm little palms. "Lift up your hand," he said, "if you hear me talking;" but as he loosened his hold, her hand fell like a lifeless thing at her side.

With tears of grief and fright, he said softly, "Granny, wink

your eye if you can't speak nor move." Slowly one poor eyelid closed. He kissed the closed lid. "Is it all the way you can talk, Granny? What has come to you? Shall I call the doctor, or Mrs. Malone, or anybody we know, Granny? Try to shut your eyes when we get hold of the one you want.

"Is it the doctor?" He watched the mournful eyes earnestly.

"Mrs. Malone?" He waited a full minute.

"The good-for-nothing old landlord?" Again he waited.

"Miss Minerva?" Slowly the eye closed.

"I will have her here in one quarter of a minute," he said hopefully.

Miss Minerva and the princess were still walking in the avenue, when he came breathlessly up and knocked on the gate.

"Granny," he gasped, as Miss Minerva opened the gate. "Come to her! She wants you. Oh! you won't wait, Miss Minerva; she can't speak to me, only can wink one eye. You can help her, for you know everything, and are rich."

"Yes; I will go," said Miss Minerva, "but you sit down and take a long breath, while I watch the princess into the house."

"Don't wait," said Her Royal Highness, with anxious dignity. "I will go right straight in," and without a word of curiosity to Dick she ran rapidly toward the house.

"What a queer little princess!" said Miss Minerva.

"A dear, good little princess!" said Dick fervently, as he grasped Miss Minerva's hand and hurried her away.

"She can't speak," he exclaimed, his mind returning to his great sorrow, as they walked rapidly to the little house.

"You go into the other room," said Miss Minerva, as she sat down by the bed.

"She can only shut her eye for yes," said he, looking tenderly at the anxious face that was watching him, "and you be awful kind to her, 'cause she can't talk, or even hold up her hand."

"I want to tell her something that will make her feel better," said Miss Minerva cheerfully.

After he had gone, she turned toward the old woman and said, "You are worrying about the child; but it is all nonsense, for I shall take him and educate him: make a smart, perhaps a good man of him. Make a sign, if you understand me."

The old woman closed her eye, and Miss Minerva continued, "There is but one thing to prevent my adopting him, and making a gentleman of him." The old eyes were watching her eagerly. "This boy has a father, who is likely to appear at any time and claim him. Is not that likely to happen? Is there a possibility that it might happen?"

She need not have answered, that poor old woman; there was, perhaps, so much to be gained for her dearie if she made no sign; there was more than a chance, too, that Dick's father was dead. It was years since he had been heard from, yet there was a possibility that he might come back at any time.

"Is there a possibility?" said Miss Minerva firmly.

Slowly the faithful eye closed, and Miss Minerva thought a look of dignity stole into the old face.

"He is you own grandson?"

The grandmother seemed to make her one poor sign of assent more quickly than before, as if the acknowledgment pleased her.

"If he is always as honorable as his grandmother, I shall be well satisfied with him," said Miss Minerva, "and I would adopt

him if I thought his father would turn up the next day. Does that make you feel better?"

The look of trust and gratitude that shone in the eyes, so soon to close forever, Miss Minerva never forgot.

"I shall send Dr. Freshhopes," she said to Dick as she went out.

Late in the evening, after the doctor had gone, and a neighbor sat by his grandmother's bed, Dick went to the small kitchen, and throwing himself on his knees before the great faded chair of the old woman, prayed with heart-breaking fervor: "Dear God in the holy heaven! make Granny well, or most well, so she can speak to me. I never will be bad again, if she can get well. I never will leave her, I never will think any more about it. Jesus, keep her. Amen."

Who shall say because his simple prayer was not answered, that it was not heard?

CHAPTER VI.

DICK VISITS MISS O'HARA.

DICK had been living six weeks in the house with the princess. At first, the thought that he could never see his granny again, not even if he went down to the little house they had left, brought the hot tears to his eyes many times a day. But the princess comforted him, and Miss Minerva proved a good foster-mother.

He soon learned that Miss Minerva, the princess and her father recognized him as one of the family; but with the quick perception of a frank and sensitive child, he felt that the grandmother, although ever kind and gentle to him, would rather he had found a home elsewhere, for her heart, though large, was quite filled with the princess. As for the grandfather, Dick felt that he was only too ready to exaggerate his smallest fault; indeed, when unable to discover one, the old gentleman would sit sternly watching him over his spectacles, lest by chance one might escape observation and censure.

As the weeks went by, and time began to soften his grief, he found himself looking about with a strange longing to do something, and something that belonged to his old life.

One morning he had been severely reproved at the table, by the old gentleman, for using his knife instead of his fork. Pride had kept the tears back, until Jack said kindly, "We can't learn

everything at once, can we, Dick? Even Her Royal Highness sometimes makes mistakes."

At the first sound of sympathy, Dick rushed from the table, without ceremony, and was found by Miss Minerva weeping bitterly. "Have you come to scold me, too?" he asked, with a touch of humor in his tearful voice; "I never did anything wrong with Granny. Oh! I hate rich people and nice houses. I want my Granny—my dear, dear, good Granny!"

The more he refused to forget his granny, the better pleased was Miss Minerva. "Some day," she said to herself, "he will care for me. The more he cares for her, the more he will be able to care for me." But she comforted him in her way.

"You'd better go away to-day," she said; "go see some of the people you knew before you came here. Take this money, and buy you some red putty."

"May I go?" he cried joyfully; "may I go see the men at the stone yard? I won't stay more than six minutes, if you will let me."

There was something like a jealous throb in her heart as he grasped her hand in his excitement, but she said coldly, "You may stay all the morning, if you wish."

"Miss Minerva's pretty kind to me," he said to the princess, as she stood watching him button his warm coat at the front door, "and I am going to do something, and I'm awful sorry I can't tell you."

"I think I should tell you," said the princess gently.

"I wish I could tell you, I know you would help me do it, but I can't, I can't!"

"I would rather be a boy," said the princess to her grandmother, as Dick's light feet flew down the avenue.

"Is there anything you want, dear?" said her grandmother.

"No," said the princess, but there were tears in her eyes, which the old lady felt sure Dick had caused.

"Do you want Dick to go away?" she asked, although she knew Miss Minerva's gaze was fastened on her face.

"No, not for anything!" sobbed the princess; "but I always tell him everything."

"And he shall tell you everything," said Miss Minerva.

At this time, like a wild bird let loose from a golden cage, Dick was flying with joyful haste toward the scenes of his humble life.

How proud he was when he ordered a large piece of red putty, at the glazier's, and had money left after paying for it. He was afraid the old man knew how proud he felt, so he went back and hung over the little counter familiarly, as he used to do when he wore the torn cap, and bought a cent's worth of putty, or begged a piece.

As he walked away he thought how pleased his granny would have been if she could have seen him with so much putty. Unconsciously, he was walking towards his old home. He had never been there since Miss Minerva took him away.

When he came in sight of the little house, he wondered what was wrong about it. Surely he never lived there! The snow lay thick upon the black roof, and the wind was blowing the kitchen blind; the blind at the window where his granny always sat.

He found a bit of string and tied it back, as he had done so many times, that the sun might fall where her great chair stood.

Then he looked in. The shadow of desertion had fallen there, and, well-known as the room really was to him, it looked now quite

unfamiliar; and was it strange that the same shadow should fall on his little heart, or, as he turned away, that he should feel a sudden affection for his peculiar guardian?

"I will try to please her!" he said; "I will go right to work and make her a *finx*." This thought quite filled him. The stone yard was forgotten, or ignored.

"O, dear!" he said with a sigh, "if I might only tell the princess. She could find a picture in one of her books. But I must not look into a book, or ask any but ignorant people. Now, that's great!" He stopped short, and appealed to the red putty, in want of a more sympathetic listener. "All the ignorant people I know is Mrs. Malone—she don't know anything—and Thomas, he don't know anything—it wouldn't be fair to ask Jane, for she reads lots of books; I'm afraid she ain't ignorant. Miss O'Hara! I never saw her read a book, but she knows something." So with a hopeful trust in Miss O'Hara's knowledge and ignorance, he started on the run for his new home.

It was a pleasure to the big cook, even when Dick stood in old clothes at the back door, and received now and then from her a bit of cake, a tart, or some sweetmeat, to hear herself addressed as *Miss O'Hara*; but when he came there to live, and shared alike with the princess, and still continued this respectful title, her admiration for him seemed without limit. When he came running into the kitchen with his great lump of putty, she received him with a cordial "Good-morning!"

"Are you an ignorant person, Miss O'Hara?" He thought he ought to go through the form of asking. She watched him closely while he threw off his hat and wiped his heated forehead.

"What's that yer asking?" she said when he turned towards her again.

"Are you an ignorant person?"

"An ignorant person, is it, yer saying?" said the cook, looking into his innocent face with indignant curiosity in her own. "Yer getting to hould yerself pretty high, now, ain't yer, since Miss Minerva's took yez!" She was both angry and disappointed.

"No, no! don't say that, Miss O'Hara," he said earnestly; "I want you to say that you are an ignorant person, because I must only ask ignorant people, Miss Minerva said. There ain't anybody that I can ask."

She began to feel a little sorry for him. "But I'll be doin' ye no good," she said, crossing her bare red arms, and leaning her huge body forward toward him, in a most provoking manner, "for it's very woise that I am, Misther Dick."

"O, Miss O'Hara! you are mean not to help me," he said. "I mustn't ask you unless you are an ignorant person."

"Ah!" she said, with a complete change of manner and tone, "it's not much I'm knowing."

"I thought so," said he, confidently, and he poured into her willing ear the present desire of his heart.

"Now," he said in conclusion, "if you can only tell me what a *finx* is, I know I can make something a little like it."

"A *finx*, is it?" said Miss O'Hara musingly.

"Yes," he said; "I never can forget it again."

"Is it a baste?" asked Miss O'Hara.

"Of course it is."

She closed her eyes in meditation, and at short intervals, repeated "A—*finx*."

He watched her anxiously. She felt his respectful attention, and was flattered by it.

"I know it now," she said; "ye're after making a mistake; it's not a *finx* at all, but a *lynx*; the baste they make the muffs of! They was telling me to buy me one this winter, and Johann herself will be getting one."

He shook his head sadly. "I know it was a finx," he said.

"Depind upon it, there is no such baste," said Miss O'Hara, very firmly.

"What is a lynx like?" said he dejectedly.

"He's a round black baste, wid fur on him," she said, drawing her portrait wholly from the muff she had seen.

The boy looked puzzled.

She saw that she was helping him very little, and said kindly, "Don't be minding me, but go be looking for him in the books."

"I never wanted a book so much in my life," he sighed, "but she told me I must not look in a book." He leaned his elbow on the table, dropped his head upon his hand, and looked with disgust at the putty.

"I'd be turning meself into a fur baste if I could, for yer," she said, touched by his depression.

This self-sacrifice seemed to rouse and encourage him.

"I will make something," he said, taking up the putty.

"Ah! the dirty stuff," said Miss O'Hara.

He drew a stubby pencil from his pocket, and a piece of brown paper from the table, and made a picture of an animal wholly unknown to zoölogists, and handed it to her.

"Why wouldn't he look like that?" she said, with open admiration in her face and voice. "But the hair on him is too short."

He lengthened it so rapidly, she was amazed.

"It looks like nothing at all," he said, scratching his pencil over it. "I will not try to have a pattern."

He took up the putty, and worked steadily for half an hour.



"SHE DROPPED ON HER HANDS AND KNEES AT HIS FEET."

She went about her work, returning now and then to see how he was getting on.

After molding, and pinching, and scraping, he threw it upon the table with tears in his eyes; then he caught it up again and began to cast his eyes about the great kitchen for inspiration. His perseverance inspired his companion. She arose from the chair she had taken for a moment, and going to the range where a

huge buffalo robe hung to dry, she dragged it toward him, saying, "I'll make a baste for ye, worser and woilder than a lynx!" And wrapping herself in the robe, with a roar, of which any lioness might be proud, she dropped on her hands and knees, like a felled ox, at his feet.

"Good, good!" he cried gratefully; "I can make the back now, anyway. Keep so a little while! I will beat your eggs—and go to the store—and—and"—he was lost in his work. His eyes glistened and his cheeks grew red. He worked away without speaking. Time was passing, and Miss O'Hara was growing very tired.

The clock struck twelve, and Thomas was heard coming for something at the back door. She threw off the heavy robe and stretched herself.

"Will you put it on again for me to-morrow?" he whispered.

"Will I be spinding the rest of me life on all-foors for yees?" she said, hanging the robe again by the fire.

CHAPTER VII.

MISS MINERVA FINDS HER LOVE DIVIDED.

DICK's visits to the kitchen had not escaped observation. The princess wisely kept to herself the pain that these secret visits caused her, for she knew her grandfather was too ready to reprove.

It was the day Dick hoped to finish his work. As he left for the kitchen, he looked up at Miss Minerva with such a confident smile on his handsome face, she felt almost as if she hoped they would all come out together and abuse him, that she might battle for him.

When Dick left the room the grandfather was about to say, "Poor stock, Minerva," but there was an air about Miss Minerva which caused him to say instead, "What do you ever expect to make of that boy, Cousin?"

"Wait and see," she said.

"I rather like the little scamp," said Jack.

The princess thought if Dick had Miss Minerva and her father to defend him, he was well off indeed, and she said, "I wish he would play more with me; he spends whole mornings with O'Hara."

"The kitchen is where he belongs," said the grandfather; and the grandmother said gently, but firmly, that she wished the princess separated as much as possible from him.

Miss Minerva looked down into the fair little face, and recalled the time, when, for the sake of seeing that face every day, she had made up her mind to stay at the old house. Now she had brought in a stranger, and her care —she would not admit for a moment that her love — was divided.

She took the princess in her arms and carried her up-stairs. Miss Minerva had a large room filled with the choicest curiosities from every clime. Two long, deep windows overlooked the avenue, with its great trees, where Miss Minerva had first seen the princess. The drive was white now, and the trees bare, except here and there where a few friendly snowflakes had lodged.

When Miss Minerva came into the room, she closed the door after her and placed the princess in one of the deep window seats. Then seating herself on the floor, she took the child's feet in her lap. "Is your Royal Highness quite comfortable?"

"Very comfortable," said the princess.

"I want to tell you a little story."

The princess had a weakness for stories. She folded her hands, and raised her eyes attentively to Miss Minerva's face.

"Surely," thought Miss Minerva, "this is the only being on this great earth I truly care for!"

"Once upon a time," said the princess.

"Once upon a time, Your Royal Highness, in a comfortable, but not a grand palace, there lived a lot of old kings and queens; and they thought the whole world lay inside of the palace grounds: but that didn't make it so, you know."

"Of course not," said the princess.

"There was an old counsellor, who sometimes stayed at the palace. He had a hawk nose, and fiery eyes. Sometimes he was

not very sweet-tempered, but he owned a small kid mitten which held wishes ; they were not wishes that really amounted to much, but many people thought a great deal of them, and some who didn't like him much were civil to him because of this kid mitten. One summer day, after he had been a long time away from the palace, he came into the garden, and there he saw dancing on a large flower, a tiny creature, with hair of the finest spun gold, and soft blue eyes. ‘Who are you?’ said the old counsellor.

“‘I am White Rose, the new princess,’ said the little creature, ‘and you are the old counsellor; you have a kid mitten full of wishes.’

“‘How do you know?’ growled the counsellor.

“‘I have heard about you,’ she said, laughing, and swinging herself down from the flower; ‘you must give me a wish.’ The counsellor loved beautiful things, and he longed to steal the new princess and run away with her; but he wanted her to learn to love him as she loved the old kings and queens at the palace, and not on account of his kid mitten.

“‘Did you ever see a monkey?’ she asked. The counsellor thought he had. She raised her little finger, saying, ‘Every day, rainy or shiny, there is a little brown monkey comes and sits on the garden wall and grins at me and takes off his cap and bows, and is a dear little fellow. My wish will be to have that monkey. Will you give him to me?’

“‘If you treat me well, and think sometimes of me instead of my mitten, I may give you a great many things.’

“When it came time for the old counsellor to go, he could not leave the new princess. The old kings and queens begged him to stay, and he stayed.

" Little White Rose was very kind to him, and he tried to get the monkey for her; but the wishes in the mitten were only wishes that could be obtained by gold, and he found that a very poor old woman owned the monkey, and that, poor as she was, she would not sell her pet for gold. After a time she died, and left the counsellor the monkey; although he brought it to the palace he would not give it away, for he was a wise old counsellor, and he said, ' If I give away the little brown monkey, they may soon tire of him; then what will become of him? '

" White Rose was always kind to the monkey. When he upset the old china flower pots in the garden, she tried to get them set up again before the old kings took their daily walk; and she led him away when she thought they were going to scold him. But the old kings and queens said, ' This monkey is a nuisance! We can't have him here.' But they did not want the old counsellor to go away, for they liked him, to say nothing about his mitten.

" One day when the counsellor was sitting in the garden, the monkey came and sat beside him and said, ' I am looking for something for you, Mr. Counsellor, and I have to go away every day until I find it. The old kings and queens say I am a traveling monkey, and unfit to stay in the palace; but you will have a little faith in me, won't you, Mr. Counsellor? '

" He was such a handsome, brave little monkey that the old counsellor, in spite of himself, was growing fond of him. While the monkey was away, the palace was dull for White Rose, and the old kings and queens said she was happier before the horrid monkey came, and openly wished him away.

" When the counsellor turned it all over in his mind, he found that he would miss the little brown monkey himself, if he should

send him away; but he said, ‘I must love nothing but White Rose. I must send the monkey far away.’”

“What a silly man,” said the princess, “only to love one thing.”

“Every day,” continued Miss Minerva, “the old kings and queens became more determined that the monkey must go away. One old king began to fear that the counsellor was getting too fond of the monkey, and might give him too many wishes from the old kid mitten. What was to be done?” Miss Minerva paused.

“Why didn’t he take White Rose and the monkey and go away from the old kings and queens?” said the princess.

“He thought of that, but he had no right to do it, for White Rose belonged to the old kings and queens.”

“What else?” said the princess.

“That’s all.”

“All you know?”

“All.”

“Can’t you read the rest?”

“Sometime.”

“I want to hear it now.”

“I do not know it now.”

“I know, before I hear another word, that the old counsellor won’t let the monkey go away.”

“We shall see,” said Miss Minerva coolly.

For many days Dick had worked hard on “the little fur baste,” as the cook called the strange-looking creature that was struggling out of the red putty.

His model, although continually threatening to “spind no more time on all-foors,” had been wonderfully patient while he needed her.

With a light heart he came to the kitchen at the hour he was sure to find Miss O'Hara alone. There was no longer need of her services, but he felt in honor bound to finish his work under her kindly eye.

He stood waiting for her to puncture some cake with a broom-corn before uncovering it, for they always took the first look together. The cake attended to, she came towards him wiping her big hands on her calico apron, and stood respectfully waiting the unveiling.

He uncovered it as usual with rather an anxious expression which changed to one of positive horror as he quickly covered it again and said, "O, Miss O'Hara! I didn't mean to do it! I truly didn't try to do it!"

"What's hurtin' it?" she said kindly.

"Oh! I have made it look like you — like *you*, Miss O'Hara, with a tail on!" Then the absurdity overcame his horror, and he laughed heartily.

This aroused her anger. She grasped it from his hands and looked at it intently. "Do I look like a baste?" she said angrily. Then she raised it high in the air, as if to dash it to the floor. He reached out for it, instinctively, but let his hand fall quickly, as if he thought she had the right to destroy it.

As she held it aloft, her eye fell only on the well-formed back and tail; and even her quick temper was willing to spare it. "Take it off!" she said, handing it back to him.

He stood looking at it with an expression of mingled disappointment and sport.

"Take yerself off!" said Miss O'Hara. "I have a big bakin' on me hands this mornin'." She turned away as he wrapped up

the putty "baste," and slowly left the kitchen without giving it the finishing touches.

He had worked very hard, and, in spite of his disappointment, as he went up the stairs that led to his guardian's room, he found himself handling the little package very tenderly.

His knock was more timid than usual, as if he wished in some way to apologize for the unsuccessful "finx"; and when Miss Minerva opened the door he said hurriedly, "I did try awful hard, Miss Minerva, but I didn't have any book nor picture, and I never saw a finx, and it does look like Miss O'Hara, and she's mad about it." And this was the presentation to which for many days poor Dick had been looking forward.

Miss Minerva sat down, and unwrapped the red putty as gently as if it had been the finest ivory carving. Dick stood on one heavy round of her great chair, and the princess on the other.

"Would you ever know what it was?" asked the boy anxiously.

"I should know it was a sphinx, if I saw it anywhere in the whole world," said the princess. Miss Minerva said nothing, but looked at it attentively.

"Miss O'Hara said it was a lynx I wanted to make," he said, impatient at her silence.

"You had no book?" said Miss Minerva.

"No; and only Miss O'Hara to help me. Do you think you would know what it was?"

"It is wonderful, Your Royal Highness," said Miss Minerva, "but he suffered for the want of a book."

"I never will say anything again against books," he said mournfully.

Miss Minerva arose, and brought from the corner of the room

a box from which she took a small marble sphinx, and gave it to him.

"That is a truly sphinx," said the princess.

"Why," said Dick, in astonishment, "it's got a lady's head! O, ginger! ginger!! ginger!!! so has mine!" and he threw his arms around Miss Minerva's stiff neck, and the grim goddess felt that now indeed her love was divided.

Suddenly the princess whispered in Miss Minerva's ear, "Could a counsellor be a woman?"

"Possibly," returned Miss Minerva, laughing.

"And could a monkey make a sphinx?"

"Probably."

"Then the monkey must stay."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRINCESS ISSUES INVITATIONS.

"Cousin," said the grandmother, coming one morning into the room where Miss Minerva sat writing, "if you are not very busy, I should like to talk with you a few minutes."

"Go on," said Miss Minerva, at the same time closing her writing desk, for her actions were generally more courteous than her words.

"It may anger you, what I am going to say," said the grandmother gently.

"No doubt," said Miss Minerva.

"The truth is, Minerva, that Princess is changing. She used to live in a little world of her own. I carefully read every book that she was to see, and from these books she obtained all her ideas." Miss Minerva shook her head, but the grandmother continued: "Imaginary people satisfied her. She cared nothing for a life with real children; but it has all changed since that boy came here, and this morning she asked me if she could have a party."

"What an unnatural child!" said Miss Minerva stiffly.

The grandmother's face flushed a little. "Have you ever seen any children, Minerva, in this place, that you would be willing to invite to see Princess?"

"I believe, Henrietta, that the child who could injure Her Royal Highness is yet to be born," said Miss Minerva proudly.

"How absurd!" said the grandmother; but Miss Minerva saw she was pleased, and had no doubt she really believed it herself.

"I understand what is the matter," said Miss Minerva; "you think if the princess has a party, she must make a little goose of herself, and ape the manners of grown people. I would not have her dress in ruffles up to her neck, like Abby Hill's grandchild—poor little thing! If the princess says anything more about it, tell her yes, she may have a party; and let her get it up according to her own ideas."

"I have it!" said the grandmother. "I will let her have a party, and invite her grandfather, and her father, and you, and every one in the house. She may order anything she pleases, and I am sure we could make her have a pleasant time."

Miss Minerva nodded her head so affably the grandmother was a little astonished.

"Certainly, certainly," said Miss Minerva graciously; "and the next time her grandfather wants a whist party, he can invite the princess, and Dick, and me, and then he won't have to go out of the house."

"You make me laugh, Minerva, although I am vexed."

"Just as much sense in it," said Miss Minerva. "The children feel that old folks cannot enjoy the things that they enjoy; and it is so. Perhaps, Henrietta, you were not cheated out of your childhood; I was."

The grandmother sighed.

The princess and Dick rushed into the room in an excited manner.

"Did you knock, my dear?" said the grandmother, addressing the princess, but looking at Dick.

"We have an understanding about that," said Miss Minerva. "At this time I am usually writing; they come in, and if I do not speak, they go away without a word."

"I want to know," said the princess, "how you send word to any one to come to a party. Dick says you must send a ticket. When Flora Hill had a party, she sent me a little letter. Grandma wouldn't let me go, and I lost it."

"You must write anything you please," said Miss Minerva.

"I was going to write, 'Please come to my party,' but Dick said, say, 'Miss Princess Nelson gives a fine party to-morrow; doors open at three.'

"I never went to a party," said Dick, blushing.

"In this book," said the princess, "a squirrel has a party, and sends to all the birds and squirrels; here's what she says: 'The pleasure of your company is requested Thursday evening, at the house of Mrs. Greyback, second nut-tree after passing the hen-house.'" Her Royal Highness looked a trifle puzzled.

"Write anything you please; they will be glad to come," said Miss Minerva, "and invite anybody you want."

"Minerva!" said the grandmother sadly.

"May we have it?" the princess cried.

"We?" said Miss Minerva.

"Yes. I can't 'tend to everything. Dick is going to help me, and have it his party, too."

Miss Minerva handed them paper enough to write a hundred petitions, saying, "Go write your invitations. Do everything about getting your children here, and I will look after the rest."

"I don't want it to be my party at all," said Dick, as they settled themselves to write. "I will help you, and carry the letters, but I don't want it to be my party."

"You think it won't be a nice party, Dick?"

"No; that's never the reason," said he; "two don't give a party."

"But they can?"

"But they don't."

"But they might?"

"Yes."

"Then we'll do it."

"No; I won't call it my party."

"I don't know what you are afraid of," she said, with a little surprise.

"If it's my party, I'd have to invite some down-town fellers I used to know. I don't know anybody else. What you going to write?" as she jammed her pen very hard into the ink.

"I don't know."

"I don't know," said he.

"Please come to my party, is easy to spell," she suggested.

"Yes; and don't sound as if you felt very big. Shall you invite any poor folks?"

"Poor folks?" she said; "I don't know: I hadn't thought. I was going to write them, and then go out for a walk, and just give them to whoever we saw that looked as if they would like to go to a party."

"That would be fun, only your grandfather wouldn't let you."

"Well, Grandma will."

The whole morning was spent in writing the invitations.

"How will they know when to come?" said Dick, after the folded papers were put in a box.

"Why, we can tell them when we give them the invitations," she said. "To-morrow is Saturday, you know—the worst day of all to spell."

"Sat-er-day," muttered Dick.

"Don't you see?"

He nodded, and covered the box.

Early in the afternoon they started to give away the invitations. The grandmother was not quite pleased with all their arrangements, but Miss Minerva said, "Let them alone; what do you care what a few foolish people say? Let them alone."

The grandmother and Miss Minerva watched them out the gate. "She never went out alone before," said the grandmother.

"She is not alone now," said Miss Minerva.

"I think we ought to go first to Flora Hill's," said the princess, "for I know her a little; I saw her once." As they past a small house, she said, "I saw a little girl there last summer, when I was out with Jane; she came to the fence and gave me some flowers. I will ask her." They entered the little gate, and rang the door-bell. A sad-faced woman opened it, and waited for them to speak. The princess opened her box, and took out an invitation, saying, "Will you please give that to your little girl, and let her come to my party to-morrow afternoon?"

"Didn't you know, darling"—the woman looked into the happy little faces before her—"she has gone to Heaven, dear?"

Dick's face grew very sober, but the princess looked, wondering at the great tears which stood in the mother's eyes, and said, "Well, will you please take one and put it in her room, for I don't

want her to think she is forgotten because she is away. My mother is in Heaven, too."

The mother took the invitation, and tried to say cheerfully, "You were very kind to remember her;" and as she read "Please come to my party," and laid the invitation away among the host of treasured things, she felt that her child was nearer than she had been for many a day.

"Now we must go to Flora's," said the princess; "she lives in that great house, over there."

When they rang the bell at Mr. Hill's house, Dick said, "Royal Highness, I'm afraid I'm scared."

"What are you afraid of?" said the princess with dignity.

"We shall have a horrid time here; I know it before the door opens."

A man servant opened the door, and said, "What do you want?"

"I should like to see Flora, if you please," said the princess.

"She is out," said the man.

"Then I would like to see her mamma, please," said the princess firmly.

"What a lie, John!" cried Miss Flora. "Lucky for me I was listening;" and she came down the stairs to the door.

"Your mamma said as you wasn't to see any more people to-day, Miss Flora, for you are to go out to-night, and you are sick."

"Come in," said Miss Flora, without looking at John; "I suppose I have seen you somewhere, but where I can't remember to save my life; but I see so many, I can't remember everybody." She caught her breath, with a little gasp after each sentence, and wrinkled her little brow as if she had been forty instead of nine.

She took them into a large, grand room, much grander than Dick had ever seen, and sank down on a sofa before they were fairly seated.

"I came," said the princess, "to ask you to come to my party."

"Don't say it's next week," gasped Miss Flora, "for I have forty places to go next week, and nothing to wear; and my side aches so I can't stand up to be measured."

"Why, it's to-morrow," said the princess.

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Miss Flora. "Why, you infant! To invite any one to-day, to a party to-morrow?"

"We live in the same town," said Dick, who did not quite enjoy hearing Her Royal Highness addressed as an infant. "If you get up early, I guess you can get there." Then his face grew very red, as he saw how grand Miss Flora really was.

"It has just come to me who you are," said Miss Flora, turning good-naturedly to the princess; "you are the queer little princess! I have heard about you. Miss Longstreet was here one day to see Grandmamma, and I heard her talking about you. Well, you are funny! But don't I wish Miss Longstreet was my cousin, and soft on me; I'd get all creation out of her. Why, she is awful rich. Did you know it?"

"She is very good," said Dick, who had not taken his eyes off Miss Flora.

"And she knows almost everything," said the princess.

Miss Flora laughed a sarcastic little laugh, which annoyed her visitors, though they could not have told why.

"You will come, if you can?" said the princess, as they arose to go.

"At three o'clock," said Dick.

"I can't remember when I went to an afternoon party," said Miss Flora. "Yes; I'll be there."

The princess placed one of the invitations on the table.

"I wish you would stay longer," said Miss Flora; "but you will come again, won't you? Never mind what John says; I am in very often in the afternoon, when he says I'm out; you just ask to see poor old Tristessee; she will always tell you the truth."

When they reached the street again, Dick gave a heavy sigh and said, "Whew! what do you think of her?"

"I think," said the princess prudently, "that I shall like her."

When they turned the corner, her hat blew off, and while Dick was helping to fasten it on, a voice very near them called out, "Halloo, Dick! don't suppose you ever saw me before."

The princess turned, and saw beside them a small, rather ragged boy, grinning good-naturedly. On one hand he had a long blue mitten, but the other was bare, and he stopped grinning a moment to blow his red fingers.

"Halloo!" said Dick, not very cordially, still busying himself with the princess' hat. At the same time the dressy little figure of Miss Flora came to his mind, and he wondered what she would say to such a looking boy as this.

"If you know Dick"—said the princess, opening her box.

"Hem!" said Dick, trying to stop her.

Although he attracted the attention of the boy, the princess continued smiling at the little fellow. "Perhaps you would like to come to my party? Here is an invitation, and it is at three o'clock to-morrow."

"Much obliged," said the boy, opening the paper; "will there be anything to pay?"

"It is a party—a party!" said the princess politely. "Thomas will be at the gate, and will show you where to go."

He gazed stupidly, then laughingly, at the invitation, until they were nearly out of sight; then he shouted for Dick to "hold on a minute."

Dick ran back with a thought of discouraging him from going.

"Would you go, Dick?" he said, as Dick stopped breathless beside him.

"I don't know," said Dick.

"I've got a good neck-tie," he said confidentially, "and—oh! come, Dick, you used to be poor once, yourself; can't yer help a feller a little? They's awful big folks, any way; don't believe they would let me in, any way."

Dick's heart was begging him to do something for his old acquaintance; but still he heard a small voice saying, "What would Miss Flora think?" He made some hasty excuse, and ran after the princess, feeling mean for the first time in his life.

"He's ashamed of me!" muttered the boy. "I'll go now, if only to nag him."

Dick found Her Royal Highness standing in the midst of a circle of admiring little girls, each with an invitation in her hand, or ready to receive one.

There were still many houses to visit that the grandmother had mentioned, and when they left the last, the box was empty, and the afternoon nearly spent.

When they turned homeward they saw Miss Minerva's old pony just sticking his nose round a corner, and as they jumped into the sleigh his mistress observed that it was impossible to dodge people forever.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCESS GIVES A PARTY.

THE worst day of all to spell arrived none too soon for the princess. There were no doubts harbored about fair weather; never had a winter sun shone more brightly or more warmly. The snow began early in the morning to melt from the avenue, and Dick said by noon it would be as dry as summer.

Miss Minerva went early to the city to order the "good things," and the children were helping the grandmother and Jane to arrange the long parlor.

"From something Cousin Minerva told me last night, Princess, I am afraid you have invited some very rude children, but you must remember if they come, dear, they are your guests. You must treat them all politely and all alike."

This was all the grandmother said, but Dick hoped in his heart that his old acquaintance would not come.

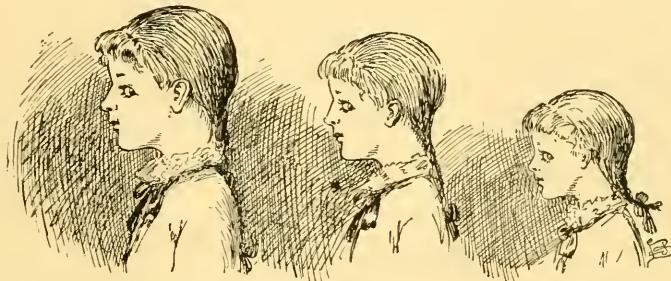
As the hour drew near when the children were expected, the grandmother seated herself at the window and anxiously watched for "the invasion," as Jack called it.

The first comers were three modest, well-dressed little girls, with happy, expectant faces, neat little braids hanging down their backs, and kid slippers tied up in brown paper. They looked so exactly alike as they passed through the gate, one behind the other,

that Thomas would have thought that he saw the same child pass in three times, except that the first little braid was a trifle longer than the second, and the second a trifle longer than the third, and each paper bundle was smaller to match the braid.

Next came a carriage, and out of the window looked the pale face of Miss Flora.

"I wanted to be the very first one, Tristesse!" she said petulantly, to a tall, thin, anxious-looking woman, who sat beside her, "for I know everything will be dreadfully absurd. See those three



THE THREE PATTIES.

little pig-tails going in the door now, all dressed alike! How I should hate to see myself every time I looked at my sister! Don't you remember that old cook we had that made the patties look all just alike? How mad I used to be because I never could choose one; they were all just so large and just so brown, and I couldn't eat them all, so I never ate any. When I am cross, and meet those three little pig-tails looking just alike, it makes me as mad as old Susan's patties used to. There! here we are, and before I get out I want you to understand, Tristesse, that you are not to run after me every time the clock strikes, with medicine, for I won't take any; I can see it in your pocket, right through your dress."

"But if you feel the pain you will take it, Miss Flossy?" said Tristessee, smiling.

Miss Flora bounded out of the carriage without a reply and ran into the house. She found Jane putting on the kid slippers of the three little patties who looked wondering around.

The princess, plainly dressed in white, stood at the parlor door ready to receive them, and Dick stood at the window anxiously watching the gate.

No violet taking its first peep at the broad world ever looked fresher or purer than Her Royal Highness as she came forward to receive her first guests, at her first party. She took the three little girls by the hand as fast as they were handed over by Jane, and looked so gratefully into their faces that they felt as if they must have conferred a great honor on the house by coming, and became immediately comfortable.

"Don't be alarmed," said Miss Flora, as Tristessee unrolled wrap after wrap, while the princess stood with outstretched hand, "she'll get to me after a while."

When Tristessee stopped unwrapping there stood before them such a tiny figure dressed in pink silk and lace; such a queer little face, all shrewdness yet all honesty, with heavy but handsome eyes, and thin, pale lips; such pitiful little legs in handsome silk stockings; such wee feet in pink boots!

As soon as she was free she held out both hands to the princess and exclaimed, "How awfully pretty you are!" There was a shade of patronage in her voice, but was she not older than Her Royal Highness?

Others now began to come in, so Flora left the princess to receive her guests, and walked over to see Dick. Her splendid

attire touched a weak chord in his really strong heart, and her easy manners and witty tongue made him inwardly vow that he would keep as near to her as possible, in spite of old acquaintances or new.

The long parlor was rapidly filling.

"What a medley, Minerva!" said the grandmother.

Miss Minerva said nothing. She was there to see. Nothing escaped her eye. When Judge Peterson's little daughter elevated her small eyebrows until they were lost in the short-cut crop of hair that at any time nearly met them, because she saw the cobbler's children there, Miss Minerva muttered "Bah!" and said to herself, "How do the small creatures learn it so quickly?" But later, when she saw them all playing together, she said, "Henrietta, it is a good medley."

The princess seemed everywhere at the same moment. She was a perfect little hostess, because she felt nothing but kindness and pleasure when she spoke to each one there. Miss Minerva standing in the shadow watched her as she flew from one to another; then she cast her eyes over to the corner where Dick sat with Miss Flora, and a curious expression came to her face.

They certainly did look very pretty; Miss Minerva admitted this to herself, though for some reason very grudgingly. Miss Flora's keen eyes had quickly seen that Judge Peterson's little girl and herself were the only ones who wore gloves; as she took hers off her pale little hands touched Miss Minerva who could not help contrasting them with the healthy brown ones of Dick.

Dick was in a very merry mood. If he had worried himself about anything he must have forgotten or conquered it. A game was being started and the princess came for them to join. He took Miss Flora by the hand while the princess started for others.

They had walked but a few steps when he suddenly dropped her hand; a frown came to his brow and the color deepened in his round cheeks. Miss Minerva turned and saw standing in the doorway Dick's old acquaintance! There was a defiance in his awkwardness that pleased her. His clothes were well mended and brushed, and a long, bright blue necktie fell nearly to his waist, otherwise he looked the same as when he had received the invitation from the princess.

Miss Minerva understood the situation in a moment; but she turned with a proud confidence in Dick only to see him gallantly retake Miss Flora's hand, and smilingly pass on.

The boy stepped in, holding his invitation tightly in one hand, as if it was a check which entitled him to a seat. Seeing Miss Minerva near he came and stood beside her.

"I came," he said, "only to nag Dick."

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself," she said sternly.

He laughed a low, reckless little laugh and leaned against the wall with his hands behind him.

"I could have had new shoes if I'd wanted them," he said, looking down at his shabby feet.

"Why didn't you, then?" said Miss Minerva.

"Sarah Ann was going to buy me some, but her beau is way off fighting the Injuns, and she's been saving her money to have her pictures took to send him. I wouldn't take her money; would you, now?"

"Your feet look well enough," said Miss Minerva, grasping him by the hand and leading him to the princess.

Her Royal Highness gave him a pleasant welcome, and said they were just going to begin to play.

Seeing him in good hands Miss Minerva left the room.

In a few minutes Jane came and called Dick. As she led him from the room she said, "What have you done, dear? Miss Minerva's got one of her black faces on."

He looked surprised but ran quickly up the stairs. He opened the door softly, without knowing that he did so, and went in.

"What is the matter?" he said, raising his frank eyes to the dark face of his guardian.

"I have been spoiling you," she said coldly; "I have found a very weak spot in you."

He looked puzzled.

"Did you see that boy that came last?"

"Yes," he said, in a very low voice.

"Did you know him?"

He nodded. Oh! if she could only know how he had despised himself.

"Take off those clothes," she said coldly.

"What for?" he asked wonderingly.

"I mean to put you into old ones," she said firmly.

He cast an appealing look at her; then grasping the hand she had lain upon his little velvet jacket, he cried, "Miss Minerva, dear Miss Minerva, beat me if you must, but don't shame me before all of them!"

His little cry cut her like a whip-cord; but Miss Minerva had her own ideas of duty. He was stripped of his fine clothes and soon stood before her in a now tight, but well-remembered suit. There was a long mirror at the end of the room and he walked slowly up to it. How well he remembered that little jacket! There was the last patch his granny had ever worked on staring at him with the

same cheerful vitality as of old. The youthful faces below faded from his mind; the tall woman so near him was forgotten. He was thinking of his granny.

He had grown a little pale after Miss Minerva had removed his other clothes, and now his utter stillness alarmed her; she approached him and placed her hand on his shoulder. He shook it off, still looking in the glass, and straightening himself, said, "I will wear these clothes down stairs; my granny made them, and I wouldn't have you think I was ashamed of her clothes!"

At this moment the grandmother who had received a hint from Jane came into the room. "Princess is asking for Dick," she said in a pleasant tone, then, seeing his strange costume, she said, "What game is this, child?"

Miss Minerva explained in a few words while Dick stood with a drooped head.

The grandmother hastily picked up all the discarded finery and brought it to Dick. A bright red spot was burning in each pale cheek. "Dress yourself properly," she said, "and go down stairs immediately!" Then turning to Miss Minerva, she said, "I have yielded to you, Cousin, in almost everything, but nobody, not even a child, shall be disgraced in my house!" Miss Minerva looked at her with an odd kind of admiration in her dark eyes and said, "I always thought you had it in you, Henrietta."

It seemed to Dick when he went back to the parlor as if he had been gone a very long time, and he felt a surprise to find the children engaged in the same game as when he left them.

"How sober you look!" said the princess. He stood leaning against the wall not far from the spot where his old acquaintance had stood with Miss Minerva.

A prim little girl came and stood beside him, and said in a low tone: "Can you manage it some way, Dick, so Samson can sit side of me at supper? He acts so dreadfully, and ma said I must keep him side of me if it was any way possible."

"I'll fix it," said Dick, glad of an opportunity to assist any one.

Young Samson stood in a corner with a few admiring boys who did not like games, performing many wonderful, and, to judge from the deep color in his face, dangerous feats. After each performance his prim little sister pulled down his jacket and smoothed his hair, and begged him to behave himself.

"Thith ith a good way to get an appetite for thupper," he said.

"O, Sammy!" groaned his sister, "I shall tell ma the minute I get home."

The grandfather walked about looking at them all from a distance, much as he would walk through a menagerie. After watching Samson for some minutes, he went to Miss Minerva and said, "Give them their supper now, Cousin, and send them home."

"I have been counting them," said the grandmother, "and there are two more girls than boys, so, Mr. Nelson, you and Jack will have to honor yourselves by taking two young ladies to supper."

"We shall be only too happy," said Jack.

"I should prefer," said the grandfather solemnly, "to choose my lady."

"Certainly," said Miss Minerva.

Dick had been trying since his visit to Miss Minerva's room to get near enough to his slighted friend to speak to him; but if he saw him a moment apart from the others some one would come up and speak to him before Dick could reach him. Finally he

saw him going to see Samson and he followed. "Having a good time, Ben?" he asked carelessly.

Ben turned a moment and looked at him, but without an answer turned away again toward Samson.

"They ith pairing off for thupper!" shouted young Samson, and rushing off to the other side of the room, he seized the second-sized patty and bore her blushing to a spot near the door, shouting, "Fall in for the thupper!"

Ben and Dick looked at each other and laughed. A good laugh is a merry stream that has floated many an ugly snag of misunderstanding and ill-will away to the great ocean of forgetfulness; and although Dick and Ben saw their snag floating off, they made no effort to stop it.

In spite of his sister's remonstrances, young Samson led the way to the supper room; and loud were his exclamations of delight when his eye fell on the brilliant table.

Jack kindly took the worried sister under his care, and the grandfather followed with little Miss Flora, much to Dick's disappointment.

Every one seemed at home and happy. Little Miss Peterson kept sending a small boy continually to the table for a fresh supply of dainties, which he brought, always with a proud smile, as if her capacity delighted him.

Young Samson proved himself every bit as gallant as hungry, for the second-sized patty was urged and almost forced to partake of everything on the long table. "Thay, if you wath dead," he whispered to her as he brought the top of a huge pyramid of ice-cream, "wouldn't you like a monument like that ice-cream?"

"For shame!" cried the well-behaved little patty.



THE HAPPY COMPANY.

"An' when your thither came to cry over your grave the could bring a thaucer an' a thpoon."

This did not seem so funny to the little patty as to Samson, for she looked at his red, laughing face in astonishment, and said if he didn't act better she would go and tell his sister.

"Oh! pleathe don't," he pleaded with much fear in his face, "the would come over here and thpoil all our fun, and lothe her thupper bethide."

Miss Flora ate nothing, but sat watching the others with an amused smile almost unnatural to a face so young. The grandfather was all attention, but she waved away everything he offered her, almost impatiently. "I can't eat," she said, "I can't stay much longer."

"Let me offer you some water," said the grandfather kindly, as she raised her hand to her head.

"Just call Tristessee, if you please."

The grandfather had hardly risen when the faithful Tristessee stood by his side.

"It's come!" said Miss Flora, in a low, impatient voice; "don't make a fool of me, Tristessee; I can walk to the door."

In spite of her weak gesture not to support her, Tristessee put her arm about her and almost carried her from the room. Miss Minerva and the princess followed.

"What is the matter, Flora?" cried the princess.

"I must go home; that's all," said Miss Flora.

Her face had grown very pale. Tristessee took a little bottle from her pocket and counted some pills.

"Don't make a fuss, now," said Miss Flora, "wrap me up and take me home." (She held out her hand to the princess.) "What a

shame I must go ; it's the best party I ever went to in my life, and such a funny one. Good-night ; you needn't wait to see me off. Tristessee is slower than stand-still."

"Go back," said Miss Minerva to the princess, "I will wait and see her safely into the carriage."

The princess kissed Miss Flora's pale face and ran back to the supper-room with a sad heart. After she had gone Miss Flora sank back and closed her eyes, and no doll could have been more helpless than she while they wrapped her up ; nor did she open her eyes, or seem to notice the difference, when Miss Minerva took her in her strong arms and placed her gently in the carriage by Tristessee's side. But as the carriage rolled down the avenue, she threw herself into her companion's arms, and cried bitterly, "O Tristessee, Tristessee ! I shall never be good for anything ! Why don't I die ?"

The memory of Miss Flora's white face cast a shadow over everything now, to the princess. Though there were many pleasant games in the long parlor after supper, she could not forget that her little friend was in pain. The rest forgot it too quickly ; and when the time came for "good-by" to be said, a merrier little crowd never went out at the tall iron gate.

"I am astonished," said the grandmother, when the last little cap had disappeared, "to see how well common children can behave !"

"Were they all common children ?" asked the princess.

"All but you, my dear," answered Miss Minerva.

CHAPTER X.

MISS FLORA.

A FEW days after the party the princess received a note from Mrs. Hill asking her to come and spend an hour with Flora, who was sick. "That comes of the party!" said the grandmother. "Princess never was asked before, and I do not want her to go."

"Flora is sick," said the princess earnestly.

"She will put such foolish ideas into her head, Cousin." This was said to Miss Minerva, who answered nothing. "I do not like Flora's manners; I shall not let her go," said the grandmother, still with her eyes on Miss Minerva.

"I am going to see Flora myself," said Miss Minerva, rising; "and I will ask her to excuse Her Royal Highness; shall I promise her a call any time in the future, Cousin Henrietta?"

"You may say what you think best, Cousin; I am sure it will be right," said the grandmother mildly.

Miss Minerva met Mrs. Hill just going out as she went up the steps. She would have returned to the house, but Miss Minerva coldly said her visit was to Flora.

"Poor little thing!" sighed Mrs. Hill, "she is very irritable to-day; I am really obliged to go out, she wears so on my nerves; and Tristesse can manage her much better than I, so I quite give up the care."

Miss Minerva looked at the handsome face of the mother, with no sign of fatigue visible in the clear dark eyes, and as she recalled the worn face of the little daughter, she turned hastily towards the door, as if she might, if she waited a moment longer, take this creature of the delicate nerves, just as she stood there in her shining silk, and shake her.

"Flora will be delighted to see you, but I am sure you will find her looking like a little fright, Miss Longstreet," said Mrs. Hill, waving an adieu from the carriage door.

"Wait one moment, please," said Tristessee, as they stood outside Miss Flora's door; "she had a very bad night last night, and her not expecting to see you might — might worry her a little."

In a moment Miss Minerva heard the sick child say, "I sent for the princess; I won't see anybody else!" Tristessee then whispered a few words, and Miss Flora exclaimed, "What did you bring her to the door for? you knew I would say something hateful about her. I don't care what anybody hears!"

Miss Minerva walked into the room. At first she could see nothing, it was so dark; but when her eyes became accustomed to the dim light, she saw a large, handsomely-furnished room, and from out some huge pillows, on a lounge in one corner, looked the tired eyes of Miss Flora.

Well might her dainty mamma say she looked like a fright. On the top of her head, hiding every spear of hair, was an old oil-silk cap, and below on her tiny forehead a white wet napkin. Her dark eyes looked up angrily at Miss Minerva, like some disobedient little fairy discovered doing penance. "Because you are so rich, I suppose you think everybody wants to see you!" she said, turning her face to the wall.

Without a word Miss Minerva sat down beside the lounge.

“ Go away ! ” said Miss Flora.

“ The princess could not come, and I have brought her excuse,” said Miss Minerva, drawing off her gloves.

“ She could have come if she’d wanted to, I suppose.”

“ No, her grandmother was not willing she should come to-day; to-morrow perhaps she may come,” taking up one of the hot little hands that lay so near. The sick child drew it away impatiently.

“ What is that thing on your head, Flora ? ”

Miss Flora did not answer for a moment, then said shortly, “ A wet napkin — Minerva.”

“ Not the napkin,” said Miss Minerva, smiling inwardly, “ that cap thing.”

“ Oil silk cap.”

“ What is it for ? ”

“ To keep the cologne water and ice water from spoiling my crimps.”

“ There can’t a breath of air get through it to your head; did you know that, child ? ” said Miss Minerva indignantly.

“ I ought to know it.”

“ Let me take it off.”

“ What for ? ”

“ So your poor head can breathe.”

“ I don’t breathe through the top of my head. I am going to play a waltz to-night at mamma’s party. Did you ever hear me play ? ”

“ No; and I don’t want to hear you, if you have to smother in an old skull-cap before it.”

“ I play very well.”

"Who says so?"

"My master, and papa and mamma, and people that like music."

"Is your hair tied up like a darky's, under that cap?"

"It is braided."

"Let me see."

Miss Flora pulled off the cap and Miss Minerva was indignant at the sight of the poor tortured head. Small braids tightly braided to the very scalp sprang out all over her head like snakes let loose from captivity. "Bring me a basin of water and a comb."

"No, no, Tristesse," said Miss Flora; "mamma would be disappointed and wouldn't let me play if I didn't have crimps."

"Let us have a good time, child," said Miss Minerva; "you will get rested and then you will play better." (Tristesse brought the water, and Miss Minerva's hand was on the little cap.) "Do you care more for your hair, or the way you play?"

"I was going to the opera once with mamma, and because I wet my crimps I had to stay at home. I am a fright with my hair straight. I will go to the party to-night, I will play, and I will have crimps!"

"If you will let me undo those dreadful little tails I will take you and the princess to the next opera you want to hear. Her Royal Highness never heard an opera."

"Will you? Will you have a private box and only take us?"

"Whenever you say."

Miss Flora pulled off the cap and the strong cool fingers of her visitor gently untied the tight braids; for this tall, abrupt woman had a tender and pitiful heart, and when she felt the hot head of the little girl she longed to take her in her arms away from this foolish life of pain.

"Papa says I have had my hair braided so much it has pulled my eyebrows out of place."

She lay back with a sigh of relief as Miss Minerva put the cool napkin in place of the cap, and said, "I think very likely."

"You are making fun of me; do you ever make fun of the princess?"

"I am not making fun of you, but the princess is different."

"Why are we different?"

"Why is a japonica different from a garden rose?"

Miss Flora looked sharply at her visitor. "I know what a japonica is; mamma wears them in her hair. They have wires stuck in them for stems, and turn yellow round the edges before you can get up stairs. You are very polite."

"They are beautiful flowers, little girl, that bloom in the hot-house; they do not live in the sunshine; and instead of being left to enjoy a little peace, they are tortured until they fade before they have fairly bloomed."

Miss Flora lay very still, with her eyes closed. After a while a look of merriment swept over her face and she said without opening her eyes, "Are my crimps the wire stems?"

Miss Minerva was about to say, "Why not?" but a knock at the door interrupted her.

"May I come in, Cousin Minerva?"

"It is the princess!" said Miss Flora.

"Why do you have it so dark?" said Her Royal Highness as she came groping into the room.

"She cannot bear the light," said Tristessee.

"I will have the shades up now," said Miss Flora, but as the woman let in a ray of light she covered her eyes and cried, "Only

a little bit at a time!" Tristesse pulled down the shade again and she uncovered her eyes and turned them towards the princess: "Thought your grandmother wouldn't let you come?"

"She said I might after Cousin went."

"Good-by, and have a good time," said Miss Minerva. "If you don't stay too long, your visit will do some good."

"You may go, Tristesse, and have a walk or a nap," said Miss Flora.

"What a queer name Tristesse is," said the princess when they were left alone.

"I gave her that name; her right name is Madame Hardie. She had a French husband and went to France to live, and had a horrid time. Her children died, and one time she didn't have money enough to buy a roll. Somebody papa knew sent her home, and papa took her for my nurse. Mamma used to have her read to me in French when I didn't know one word from another; one day she read something that had *tristesse* in it. I can't say it as mournfully as she did; I said, I think that would be a good name for you, Madame; what does it mean? She did not tell me at first, and I began to call her Tristesse. Now, wasn't it funny? it means sadness, or sorrow, or something of that kind. Don't you think it's a good name for her?"

"Does she like it?" asked the princess.

"I don't know; why, yes; but I never asked her. She is just as good as an angel. She takes all the care of me when I'm sick, and I say hateful things to her, and treat her dreadfully sometimes."

"Why, what for?"

"She likes me, though, better than anybody except papa. My papa is fond of me, I tell you! Your mamma is dead?"

"Yes," said the princess softly.

"You ought to be thankful it was your mamma instead of your papa."

The princess was amazed. To lose her dear mother she had been taught was the greatest loss she could possibly have suffered. She felt greatly relieved when Miss Flora changed the subject, and said, "Do you play?"

"Play?"

"Yes; the piano."

"O, no! I sing while Grandmamma plays, sometimes."

"Sing for me, now; when I am well I will play for you."

"What shall I sing?"

"What do you know?"

"I know 'Flow gently, sweet Afton,' and 'Bonnie Doon,' and papa's song — and 'I would not live alway.'"

"If you sing pretty well, I should like to hear them all."

"The minute you don't like it, I will stop."

The princess had a wonderfully sweet voice, and a childlike, but strong love for the songs she sang. As she sat there all unconscious of herself, and began "Flow gently, sweet Afton," Miss Flora gave a satisfied little nod and lay back upon the pillows to enjoy it. When she had finished the song she looked up, and as her friend made no comment, she said gently, "Another?"

"Of course!" said Miss Flora impatiently; "don't stop till I tell you."

She began "Bonnie Doon"; when she reached the words, "How can ye chant, ye little birds, an' I sae weary, fu' o' care!" she thought she heard something like a sob from the great pillows, and stopped.

"Go ahead!" cried Miss Flora savagely.

Next she sang a gay little song her papa had taught her; then suddenly, not wishing to annoy Miss Flora with any unnecessary delay, she began softly, "I would not live alway."

"That's a hymn; stop!" cried Miss Flora.

"Grandma likes that best of all."

"Your grandma is pretty old."

While the princess was trying to properly adjust old age and hymns in her mind, Miss Flora arose and went to the small piano on the other side of the room. She looked so weak and tired the princess said, "Don't try to play to-day; you are too sick."

Miss Flora rubbed her little fingers quite professionally and said, "It won't be as good as your singing, Princess, but I will play for you."

She played well for her years, but she turned restlessly from the piano after a few measures of a waltz: "It isn't any use for me to try! I can't play for mamma to-night; my fingers are like a rag doll's, and my head is all wrong."

"I didn't know you could play like that!" said the princess, in admiration.

"I would rather sing," said Miss Flora, as she crept again among the pillows.

"Can't you sing?"

"I know just how it ought to go, but I get wheezy, and crack on the high notes, so I won't try; what else can you do?"

"Perhaps I could say some verses," said the princess, hoping to amuse the invalid in some way; "do you think you would like them?"

"Let me see."

The princess began a funny poem, and so well did she repeat it, Miss Flora laughed until her eyes were full of tears, and she was obliged to hold her weak head with both hands. "I want another," she said as the princess drew a long breath after ending; "you can say pieces as well as you can sing. How queer you are! You know more than anybody I ever saw."

The princess laughed, and then she said confidentially, "If you won't tell, Flora, I will tell you something."

"Why can't I tell?"

"Because it will take so long to do what I mean."

"No; I won't tell."

"I am going to learn to play the violin; papa says he will teach me. He is going to buy me a little violin so I can play with him. Grandpa says I shall want bloomers if I have one, and he won't have that kind of a girl in the family."

"Your grandpa is pretty fussy, isn't he?"

"He will let me do anything, but sometimes he is pretty cross to Dick."

"When you get your violin you can come and play with me. I will ask papa to buy a book for violin and piano."

"O, no! not yet, Flora; not for a long time."

"Just as soon as you get it, you just march right over here."

"I can play a little of 'Flow gently, sweet Afton,' on papa's violin, but Dick says it flows pretty jerky."

"I can stand it," said Miss Flora heroically.

The afternoon had slipped away; the waltz she was to play, with crimps and other miseries, were forgotten; and when Her Royal Highness went away, Miss Flora lay smiling among the pillows, her dark hair hanging as straight as an Indian's about her pale face.

CHAPTER XI.

A VISIT BY MOONLIGHT.

THERE had been a heavy snowstorm, and everything without was glittering white. The wind held its breath at the beauty of the morning. The cold, still air did not stir a snowflake on the tall trees. There they stood like brides, and the sun came like a stately bridegroom, and kissed them every one; but his cold kiss did not disarrange in the least their beautiful veils.

“When it is so still out of doors, I think we might have some noise in the house,” said the princess.

“Make as much noise as you please,” said the grandmother, but the princess saw that her face was troubled.

Dick stood gesticulating violently at the door, and the princess imagined that he might have something of value to communicate, so she ran after him up to Miss Minerva’s room. He pulled Her Royal Highness in and quickly shut the door. Miss Minerva had gone suddenly to the city.

“I have found out what is the matter, Royal Highness,” he gasped, his breath coming very short from his hasty run up the stairs.

“Is it anything very bad?” she asked in anxious admiration.

He nodded, and looked around. As no ear was visible but the small one of Her Royal Highness, he said mysteriously, “Miss

O'Hara is not a—a criminil—but something worse!" The princess looked as much moved as the trees when the sun had kissed them. He was disappointed, and said, "Don't you care?"

"I don't know what it is," she said; "a criminil?"

He thought her indifference was somewhat excusable. "A criminil," he explained, "is a jailman, or a thief—or a murderer."

The last word caused her to grasp his arm in fear for a moment; then an indignant light flashed in her eyes, and she said, "O'Hara a bad, wicked woman? Somebody has told a story about her, but I will never, never believe it!"

"I knew you wouldn't," said he confidently, "any more than I did."

"Who told you, Dick?"

He blushed.

"Won't you tell me who told you?"

"I listened," he said, finally. "I know I ought to be ashamed, but you know I told you Miss O'Hara had a bad brother and had to pay lots of money to keep him out of jail, or something? When she came home, you know, she was sick, and your grandmother wouldn't let her go to Thomas's house; well, now they are going to send her way off in the woods where the gardener's old house is; that old house with the broken chimney and smashed windows." (Tears sprang to the princess' eyes.) "I heard your father say, 'I am not afraid of her; she must not be treated like a criminil'; then your Grandfather said, 'She is worse than a criminil!'"

"Does she know what—what Grandpa is going to do?" gasped the princess.

"That's the worst part of it," said Dick curiously; "she wants to go."

"Wants to go!" she exclaimed.

"That is what your father said. They are going to take her there to-day, and Miss Minerva has gone to the city to get a stout woman to look out for her. They would have to get a pretty stout one, for Miss O'Hara is so big herself."

"Look out for her!" whispered the princess.

"So she can't run away, I suppose," said he gloomily.

"O, Dick! will they really shut her up?"

He nodded savagely.

"Do you think Grandma would let me go and see her, just to tell her I did not believe anything about it? I don't believe Grandma knows it, Dick."

"I listened," said he, looking at her appealingly, as if his good name rested in her hands.

"I wish you hadn't," she said simply.

"It was mean, but I am glad I did it; I don't believe she's bad."

"Do you think I believe she is bad? I would take her my little rosebud —she knows it is the first blossom; then she would think I liked her, wouldn't she?"

"Your grandma wouldn't let you go, nor Miss Minerva wouldn't let me, but I am going. I must go!"

"Without asking?"

"Miss Minerva would say No if I asked her."

"I could not go without asking," sighed the princess.

"No," he said musingly; "you can't go, I'm 'fraid."

"When shall you go?"

"After dark." He tried to answer carelessly, but he felt, with the princess, that he had made up his mind to do a dreadful thing.

"Will you tell O'Hara that I sent her my love, and give her the rose, and tell her I was not afraid to go, but"—

"Only you was!"

"You were," she said gently.

"Yes, I will tell her," he said hastily, ignoring the correction. "Only she won't believe it. What if I sent my love and a rose to her, do you believe that she would believe that I didn't believe that she wasn't a criminil, or something worse?"

"I am not afraid to go," she said firmly, "but if Grandma knew I had gone she would be frightened."

"Miss O'Hara is good, and I mean to tell her so," said Dick persistently.

"There is papa calling," she said, in a troubled tone; "what shall I tell him?"

"Don't let it out till after I have been there," he said, holding her by the sleeve.

"Come, come," cried Jack, "we have nothing to do; let us go and help make the sleighing good."

Never did a drive seem so long to children. They could not forget O'Hara. They thought perhaps before they came back she would be gone—gone to the little old house behind the wood.

Dick imagined her there all alone, save the stout woman who guarded the door. Poor Miss O'Hara! sick, wrongfully accused, disgraced, deserted. He looked in Jack's kind face and would have asked what it all meant and confessed that he had listened—but what would the grandfather do to him?

The princess longed to pour out the questions that were flocking to her tightly-closed lips, but to do this would betray Dick.

Even Jack appeared quiet and a little absent-minded. They were glad when the long drive was over.

After supper the princess found Dick looking gloomily out of the dining-room window into the darkness. "If you will go now," she whispered, "I will go with you. I can take Cousin Minerva's boots, and put them on over my boots, and I will wear Grandma's big shawl. I believe you are afraid to go alone."

"Any one would be," he returned, with more honesty than valor. "You are an awful good little thing. Your grandpa and grandma are playing chess, and Miss Minerva is reading. Maybe we can go and get back before they could say Jack Robinson."

Her Royal Highness hurried into the big boots of Miss Minerva, and throwing her grandmother's shawl over her head, the two conspirators disappeared softly through a side door.

The hard snow crunched reprovingly under their feet, as if it would call somebody to take them back; but the friendly moon looked down upon them kindly. But she has so often looked down on such sad sights that perhaps this did not seem so very wrong to her. They stopped and looked up at her, and the princess said, "The moon will keep us from being afraid or getting lost."

"I don't like the moon very well," he said.

"Why — why not?" asked Her Royal Highness, whose breath was growing shorter and shorter from trying to keep step with Dick in Miss Minerva's big boots.

"Because"—he spoke softly; as if he feared the Queen of Night might hear him—"when it's dark a tree is a tree and a bush is a bush; but when the moon shines and a tree moves you feel like a great giant is coming after you, and the bushes look like the dwarfs in Flora's picture books."



DICK AND THE PRINCESS SET OUT UPON THEIR ERRAND.

"I couldn't run if they were all after me," she said, laughing.

"All what?"

"The trees and the bushes. I can't go one step more in these boots," declared the princess.

"Don't kick them off, you will get cold! Don't do it!" Dick implored in a whisper, as she sat down upon the snow.

"There they go!" she said, "the snow is hard."

When they entered the little wood they saw a light shining through the trees.

"There is the house!" he said, seizing her hand.

She wrapped her shawl over her stinging fingers, and they soon stood with loud-beating hearts at the door of the little old house. They crept softly up and looked in the uncurtained window. A bright fire burned in the old fireplace, and before it, in a huge rocking-chair, sat the stout woman that Miss Minerva must have sent from the city.

"I see Miss O'Hara in bed," whispered Dick, for the princess had withdrawn from the window.

"Does she look frightened?" asked the princess anxiously.

"Can't see her face," he said, "she's got a night-cap on."

"Has she?" Her Royal Highness asked sadly, not knowing whether, in Miss O'Hara's case, this ought to be considered a hopeful sign or not.

"She don't want to stay in bed," he said, withdrawing his nose from the window-pane and taking his small companion's hand, as if now he had discovered something worth telling; "she is tossing up her arms dreadfully; and I thought I heard her groan!"

The princess' lips trembled, but before he could tell her not to cry, she sprang up the steps and gave a quick rap upon the door.

"Who's there?" said the stout woman, rising.

"Open the door," said Her Royal Highness.

"Who are ye?" said the woman, without unlocking the door, although the children heard her hand on the latch.

"Dick and the princess," answered Her Royal Highness.

"I thought it was her voice, the darlin'! sind her away, sind her away!" cried O'Hara, "an' yerself, Mister Dick, away wid yees! Do ye hear? go away!"

"We don't believe any of the lies about you," roared Dick; "let us in, Miss O'Hara!"

"Don't yer opin the mouth round this voile place, darlin'," cried O'Hara; "ye'll be takin' the small-pox, and the heart o' me 'll break."

"She's only got the small-pox," said Dick.

"What's that?" asked Her Royal Highness.

"A kind o' fever that sailors have."

"Can't we go in and get warm?"

"No, sir. Your grandma 'd get scared some, I guess, if you had it; my granny wouldn't let me have it."

"Will she die?" The princess was shivering now.

"Sailors don't," he said comfortingly.

"Are yees gone?" screamed O'Hara.

"We are going," he screamed in answer; "if you want anything I will get it for you. We thought you was locked up here, and we was going to take you out."

"Be off wid yees, quick!" cried the stout woman.

"There is a rose for you on the window," cried the princess.

After they were out of hearing, for some reason or other, the stout woman went out and brought in the frozen rose and gave it

to Miss O'Hara, who kissed its cool leaves, and, turning her face to the wall, cried like a baby.

If Dick had felt like a hero as they went into the little wood, before the visit to the old house, he certainly felt ordinary enough as they re-entered it on their way back. He wanted to tell Her Royal Highness how "cheap" he did feel, but he could not bear the idea of talking over what had once seemed to him such a tragic event.

The princess, having no reputation of heroism to sustain, simply felt relieved that O'Hara was only sick with some kind of a fever; though why she should have a sailor's disorder, puzzled her not a little. The stout woman, viewed in the light of a nurse, instead of a jailer, so changed the whole tone of her imagination, that she would have felt quite merry going home, in fact quite happy, but for a fear that she had deceived her kind grandmother, and a feeling that she never should be thoroughly warm again.

They said little, as Dick was in a gloomy mood and the princess was so very cold. As they neared the house he saw a tall, dark figure coming toward them. He grasped the princess, and for a moment they stood silent and frightened.

"It's a ghost!" he whispered; "let us go back."

"I thought ghosts were white," she whispered; "anyway, I don't feel afraid," as the dark figure moved rapidly away from the house.

"I suppose," he said, his lively imagination never deserting him, "that when there's snow they have to be black, or they wouldn't show much."

The princess did not answer, excellent as this reasoning must have appeared to her, for her attention was fastened to the dark object which was stooping down examining the snow.

"Let us go back and stay with Miss O'Hara till morning," he

said, but a moment later he ran and threw himself into the arms of the tall figure, and the princess following, cried, "Why, it is Cousin Minerva!"

It would have been difficult indeed for Dick to have surprised his guardian, but when Miss Minerva saw the princess a look of dumb surprise came for a moment into her dark face. "Where have you been?" she asked in a whisper.

"We thought Miss O'Hara was shut up and"—

"Do not say one more word," she said sternly, and led them into the house as softly as they had left it.

Silently they stole up-stairs like three real "criminils."

The grandmother had believed them to be all the time in Miss Minerva's room.

"I am glad we went," thought Dick as he crept into bed, "for Miss O'Hara might have been locked up and then she would have known that we did not think she was bad."

He held Miss Minerva by his bedside long enough to tell in hurried whispers the real cause of their visit, and older heads than his might have been puzzled at the look she gave him as she hurried away to tell the grandmother she had taken Her Royal Highness into her bed, as it was a very cold night.

"I have lost this game," said the grandmother, "and Princess ought to have been in bed a good half-hour ago."

CHAPTER XII.

PUNISHMENT.

THERE was very little sleep for Miss Minerva that night. • A fear that she ought to tell the grandmother where the princess had been would have kept her awake if Dick's tossing and talking in his sleep in the next room had not caused her to fear that he was going to be sick. Then she must be up in time to send early for the doctor and ask his advice.

Dare she tell the grandmother the whole truth ?

It ended, as one would suppose, by her not sleeping at all.

No hero could possibly possess a less valiant appearance than Master Dick when the sun looked in on him the following morning. He turned away from the light with a dismal croak which brought Miss Minerva to his side.

“ Well, Sir Crow,” she said, not very gently.

“ Oh ! ” but he stopped suddenly, as if he had been a real crow and the corn he had stolen had lodged in his throat. He felt still more dejected when he looked up and saw Dr. Freshhopes standing behind his guardian.

The wail of Miss O'Hara came back to his mind. “ Yes,” he thought, “ I have caught the small-pox.”

Then he remembered the princess, and sat up in bed and croaked as well as he could, “ Has she got it, too ? ”

"It—what?" asked the doctor, laughing.

"The small-pox."

"No thanks to you if she hasn't," said the doctor; and he felt Dick's pulse and looked at his throat.

Dick looked reproachfully at Miss Minerva. How could she tell how foolish he had been? His head ached so hard and he was generally so very miserable; and now to think everybody must hear all about what he had done. As this thought went through his mind he could not keep back the tears, but covered his face that they should not see him cry.

"Take my advice, Miss Minerva, and keep this affair to yourself. There is no danger, positively no danger. The knowledge might greatly alarm everybody for nothing. They did not go into the house, and were not afraid." The doctor spoke in an undertone as he turned away.

"But if anything should happen they would have a right to blame me," she said. "Why should I decide things so coolly for other people?"

"If other people are cowards, Miss Longstreet"—

"Bah!" said Miss Minerva. "It does not give me the right to tell a lie."

"You need not tell a lie," said the doctor, laughing.

"To deceive is to lie, and always was." Miss Minerva said this so suddenly and with such old-time fire in her eye, that Dick was almost delighted, in spite of his misery, as the doctor retreated a little towards the bed.

"What do you say, Dick?" she asked. "Here is the case: If I tell her grandmother where you took Her Royal Highness, she will be dreadfully frightened, fret over her until she makes her sick,

and then get sick herself, and send you away, perhaps, which would send me off. Now, if I tell her that it was cold, and I took the princess into my bed simply on that account, just as I said last night, she would believe it, but it would be a lie."

"And you never told a lie?" said Dick anxiously.

"I don't remember that I ever told one," said Miss Minerva.

He racked his aching little brain. "You couldn't fix one so I could tell it instead of you, could you?" he asked innocently.

"Why, my boy!"

He did not care for the reproof. He hardly noticed that she called him "My boy." A few minutes before he would have been thankful that any one would own him, he felt so very miserable; but now he only hastened to explain his thought. "You see," he said, speaking earnestly, but with great difficulty, so sore was his throat, "I have told a lie, lots of times, and I ought to be the one now; but"—

"No, that would not do," said his guardian; "you have done a wrong thing; no one can do wrong without making others suffer. The question is, Will it be best for me to tell a lie? You see you have placed me in a bad fix, Dick, and you cannot help me out. Shall I help myself out with a lie?"

She watched him as she had done at the party, when he took no notice of his shabby acquaintance; would he disappoint her again?

"No, by George!" he exclaimed. "If I had lived to be as old as you are and never told a lie, I wouldn't cave in now."

His feverish face turned a shade redder as a loud laugh burst from the good-natured doctor; and Miss Minerva said, "Very good advice, Dick. I am not ashamed of you."

They left him and he felt that soon all would be told and he

would be disgraced forever, at least in the eyes of the old folks. And the princess' papa, the kind-hearted Jack, how could he forgive any one for taking Her Royal Highness into danger? Dick tossed off the bedclothes, for he seemed burning up as he thought it all over. The princess was sick, he felt sure of that; what if she should die! His head grew very hot, yet he imagined he was walking on the snow. Would Miss Minerva never come back?

He wondered what made him feel so strange, when a blind suddenly closed with a loud bang, and instantly he was back at the little old house with the black roof, and was thinking he must open the blind, or the sun would not shine on his granny. "Poor Granny!" he said, half aloud, "I must tie back the blind." He arose from the bed and with an unsteady step went to the window. He had opened it when Miss Minerva came back. She saw him standing in the cold draught with his hand on the blind.

"What do you mean?" she cried sternly.

He turned his hot face towards her; his great brown eyes had a strange, absent look, as if the real blind that he touched was far away.

She put him back into the bed and he murmured, "Granny must have the sun."

For many days he knew no one.

These were weary days for the princess. She was sick, but many hours she felt well enough to sit up and wondered why Dick's merry voice never came to her. She did not think they were sick enough to be kept in bed.

Not one word had she said about the visit to O'Hara. The princess was a true little woman, and as much as her heart reproved her for keeping the truth from her loving grandmother,

she trusted Miss Minerva, nor could she forget her promise to her, and she had no wish to be disloyal to Dick.

"I must see Dick for something very particular," she said one morning to her grandmother, when she had decided that she was quite well again.

"You cannot go upstairs yet, dear."

"Then let him come down."

"He is too sick, I fear."

"Sicker than I?"

"Yes."

"Grandma!" Her startled tone brought the grandmother quickly to her feet. "He—he's got the small-pox! It's what O'Hara's got, and sailors have it, but they don't die; Grandma, will Dick die?" The truth was out.

Her father was sitting by the window. The grandmother turned her anxious face towards him. "What makes Your Royal Highness think he would be so impolite as to bring anything so disagreeable as small-pox into the house?" he said, smiling.

"O, papa!" she exclaimed, "if he has it you won't send him away? We went to the old house where O'Hara is; we—we thought she was shut up there and we knew she wasn't bad; we went to tell her so—that we didn't believe it; and, O, papa! we didn't know what was the matter."

Her father went and sat by the fire, still smiling.

"Don't worry, darling," said the grandmother soothingly; "Dick has the scarlet fever. He is much better to-day."

"Your Royal Highness would not have been cruel to O'Hara?" said Jack, poking the glowing coals.

"No, indeed, papa!"

" You think you are so much better and kinder than your wicked father? "

" O, papa! "

" You and Dick both thought so, it seems."

" We thought you and Grandpapa both thought she was wicked and a — a criminil, Dick said."

" And your grandfather and father of course were not as wise or as just or as forgiving as Your Royal Highness."

" O, papa, papa! you try to make me feel ashamed."

" It was all Dick's fault," said the grandmother.

" I am not ashamed of either of them," said Jack; " but I am sorry that the princess had no more confidence in her father."

The princess buried her royal nose deep in the pillows and refused to hear the soft comforting words from her grandmother.

" Come," said Jack, as they wrapped her in a blanket and sat her in his lap before the fire, " come and dry your tears with your hard-hearted father; that cruel man who locks up poor cooks when they have not even made heavy bread, or burnt the cake."

The princess laughed, but a little flush of shame still flickered in her face, but she forgot all when her father gave her a letter which she opened and read aloud:—

DEAR PRINCESS :

I am not afraid of small-pox or scarlet fever; but mamma is scared out of her senses. When I saw the red flag sticking in your gate I thought your grandpa had failed.

(" What does that mean, papa? ")

" Never mind," said Jack, laughing, " go on." The princess read on :)

I hoped he had and that you wouldn't have a place to go and would have to come here to live. I am no longer an only child; I have a little brother. I don't see him much. Mamma always said she was glad she didn't have any more children, but I think it was a great mistake. I should hate to have two sisters that



THE PRINCESS READS FLORA'S LETTER.

looked just like me, and be like the three patties; you remember them, don't you? This is the only reason I am glad the baby is a boy. Soon as you can, come over and see him. He has beautiful clothes and a cradle lined with blue silk. I think mamma cares more for him than she does for me, but wait till she has had him as long. Papa bought me "Bonnie Doon" and I tried to sing it, and it sounded so like fury I tore it up; and he only laughed when I told him, and bought me another to play for you to sing. He likes me, I tell you. Don't you call this a pretty long letter? I never wrote one so long. Tristesse sends her love. Hurry up and pull in the flag and the fever if you want to see your true friend,

FLORA.

"I call that a fine letter," said Jack.

"You must take it up for Dick to read," said the princess.

The grandmother carried it to Miss Minerva's room where Dick still lay too sick to heed much that went on about him. Miss Minerva sat by the bed and the grandmother thought the long watching had changed her strong face.

"Poor little man!" said the grandmother softly; "he has been punished too much."

"He is much better to-day," said Miss Minerva; "we shall soon have him up."

"Here is a letter from Flora, that Princess sent him. I did not dare say he was too sick to read it."

"Read it," said the boy, in a voice so faint the grandmother could hardly believe it came from the merry Dick.

Miss Minerva read it, and although he did not open his eyes, or move, when she had finished he said, in so weak a tone no one could have resented it, "I hate Flora's mother; she is a soap-bubble."

"I am afraid he will be as bad as ever when he gets well, Cousin Minerva," said the grandmother, with a sad smile.

CHAPTER XIII.

A WONDERFUL STORY.

MISS FLORA wrote often, and was the first visitor admitted after Dick was pronounced convalescent.

Her Royal Highness looked as if sickness had never visited her, but Dick's round face had grown longer, and there were shadows still lurking about his eyes; as if the sun of health had not been able yet to chase every cloud of illness away.

"I expect great fun," said Miss Flora, seating herself in Miss Minerva's room. "I wanted to come while you were sick, but I couldn't. What are you going to do?"

"We have a splendid new game," said Dick; "it's telling stories. Somebody begins, then another one tells a little, then another, then another, and sometimes we get all mixed up, and the princess cries if you kill anybody in it that she thought of, and"—

"No, I don't," said the princess seriously; "but one day, Flora, I had a most beautiful queen, that was good to everybody, and I wanted her to save a little boy Cousin Minerva thought of, and when it was Dick's turn he made her swallow a rat-tail file; and of course it killed her."

"It needn't," said Dick; "I was going to fix it all splendidly."

"Yes; after she was dead!" said the princess indignantly.

"I don't know enough to play that," said Miss Flora.

"O, yes, you do!" said Dick gallantly; "anybody does. Let's call it 'The Enchanted Pony.' "

Miss Flora shook her head disapprovingly. "I don't like fairy stories," she said; "I don't like things that really couldn't happen."

"But we can make anything happen," cried Dick.

"O, Flora! you don't like fairy stories?" exclaimed the princess.

"You can each tell what you please," said Miss Minerva. "Flora need not have anything enchanted unless she wants it, and the rest can have it if they choose. It will be all the better to have a new head in it."

"Well, begin," said Miss Flora; "I know I can't do it, I never could even make up a lie."

"Once upon a time," began Dick, "there was an awful rich man named Mr.—Mr. Gold"—

"That's a great name," said Miss Flora.

"You can't laugh, nor smile, nor make fun, nor speak while anybody else is telling," said the princess.

"His name was Mr. Goldhouse," said Dick, "and he had everything he wanted but a white horse. Somebody told him he couldn't buy a white horse—all, all white, without one other colored hair in it—if he went all over the world. He was dreadful cross, and said he would; so he kept going all the time after a white horse. One day a horrid old woman with one eye and a moustache, told him if he would give her ten million dollars she would tell him where he could find one. He said, 'I will give you five millions.' She told him he was a miser, and now she wouldn't tell him unless he gave her twenty millions; so he gave her twenty millions and she took him away off where a beautiful little girl lived, a splendid little girl, with gold hair and silver shoes. She

had a white pony that never had a black hair on him. He said he had come to buy the pony. ‘I don’t want to sell him,’ said the little girl, as sweet as honey. He said she must or he would — he would throw her up in the air so high she would never come down again.”

“There!” said Miss Flora impatiently, “of course no man would say that.”

“But he did say it,” said Dick coolly; “and the little girl said her father gave her the pony before he went to California; but Mr. Goldhouse was bound to have it; and when nobody was looking he threw the splendid little girl up into the air, and one of her silver shoes came down pretty hard and struck him on the nose, and it began to bleed. Now, Princess, you take it.”

“Dick always tells somebody else to take it when he gets in a dreadful place and can’t go on,” said the princess, laughing.

“That is a good place,” said Miss Minerva; “you can leave Mr. Goldhouse and his injured nose, and follow the charming little girl.”

“It is a good place,” said Her Royal Highness; “don’t you want it, Flora?”

As Miss Flora gave them to understand that with her limited talents she thought she could manage the girl of the silver shoe better after she had alighted somewhere, the princess continued: “When the wicked man threw the little girl up in the air she was not hurt one bit. He threw her up so high she went on to a lovely white cloud with a red corner. She wasn’t afraid at all, and said it was as good as her white pony, almost. Well, she rode and rode, till she came to a beautiful star. It was bigger than it looks down here; it was as big as a house, and it was as bright as gold. She

had to put up her hand over her eyes, it dazzled them so. The cloud stopped, and an angel came to the door and took her in and gave her beautiful things, and said she was looking down when the man threw her up. ‘It didn’t hurt, and I am glad I came up here,’ said the little girl.—Cousin Minerva’s turn now.”

“When the little girl on the white cloud floated out of sight,” said Miss Minerva, “Mr. Goldhouse started to get the pony. He forgot that, as he threw the child into the air, the pony flew by him taking a line of bright red from his unfortunate nose upon his silver white side. He called the old woman with the one eye, but she had disappeared also. He went home, but he could not rest; for wherever he went he saw the dear little girl minus one silver shoe. He grew sick and the doctors said they could not help him; nothing would help him but a ride on a horse with not one dark hair on him.

“The old woman came again and told him that every night the pony was at the child’s house, but disappeared again in the morning. Mr. Goldhouse sent ten men to bring the pony in the night. He was happy when he saw them coming with the pony, and said, ‘I shall soon ride upon the pony that has not a dark hair on him —the pony all white, silver white! I shall then be well.’

“When they carried him out he said, ‘Turn him round so that I may see that there is not one dark hair!’ They turned the pony around and he saw the dark stain upon its side. ‘Wash it off, or it will do me no good to ride it,’ he said. But the pony would not be washed. While they were talking and trying all manner of ways to get it to stand to be washed, it disappeared.

“Back to bed went Mr. Goldhouse, knowing his own wicked act had kept him from getting well. He took the little silver shoe

from under his pillow and wished he could find the child he had treated so cruelly. His bed was near the window, and he looked up into the blue sky to see if he could see her there. Far away he saw a tiny white cloud with a red corner. ‘With all my money,’ he said, ‘I cannot have that little cloud. It belongs to the beggar in the street as much as it belongs to me. It is more beautiful than anything I ever owned; it grows to look like a tiny white horse, and the red corner looks like the stain on the little girl’s pony. Must everything have a stain now because I was wicked and threw that child into the air?’

“The cloud came nearer and nearer. He thought as it grew larger that he saw a child riding upon it. ‘She is not dead!’ he cried, and his tears fell fast upon the silver shoe.—Go on, Flora.”

“I couldn’t do it,” said Miss Flora, “but it is perfectly lovely for folks that know anything. Go round again and then I will try; but I shall spoil it, I know. Dick, you go on.”

“Well,” said Dick, “when the old one-eyed woman didn’t get old Goldhouse any white horse, all white, he wanted his twenty millions back; but the old woman had spent it all, so he couldn’t get it. When he told her about the cloud with the red corner, she said, ‘You old goose! Don’t you know that is the pony with the little girl on it? That pony is enchanted.’ ‘I must have it,’ said old Goldhouse; ‘you are a witch; get it for me.’

“So she got into a balloon that she always carried in her pocket, and went after the little girl. The wind blew her round and round, like a kite short o’ bobs, and while she was sailing around, the enchanted pony came, with the girl on his back, and trotted around the balloon. She tried like everything to grab the bridle, but he started off so she couldn’t get him. She kept going

higher and higher, away up above the world and the stars and the moon"—

"Now isn't that an awful place to stop?" asked the princess appealingly, of Miss Minerva.

"Let me go on, then," and Miss Minerva continued: "The old woman, like most old women, usually made the most of what advantages she had for information, and finding herself so high, she said merrily, 'Now, I declare, this is a good time to see the other side of the moon.' As she said this she found herself at the back door of the moon. There she saw an old woman so much older than herself that she felt quite like a girl. 'What does this mean?' she said, as she saw the old woman scrubbing a tremendous lamp; 'do you mean to say that the man in the moon is a woman?'

"The old woman looked up from her work and said, 'Did you suppose, ma'am, that for thousands of years the light has been kept a-goin' in the moon with only a man in the house?' 'But,' said her curious visitor, 'whenever we look up we only see the man.' 'You are quite right there,' returned the man in the moon's wife; 'when the great lamp is scoured and trimmed and lighted, and the evening comes, the old man sits and looks out the front windows; but, bless your heart! if he took the care of the lamp you would have pretty dark nights there below, take my word for it. Pray tell me what kind of men you have at home.' 'The next time I come,' returned the one-eyed woman, and she pushed off her balloon and floated on, saying to herself, 'Who ever would believe things would seem so natural in the moon?' She was just saying rather scornfully,—

"Where'er I turn, where'er I go,
Things are pretty much generally so"—

when a falling star, not seeing her balloon, and being in great haste, shot right through it, and the one-eyed woman would have gone to the earth like a stick from a rocket, had not the enchanted pony allowed her to alight on his back. ‘Good-day,’ said the little girl, moving to give her room.

“‘Good-day to yourself for an old acquaintance,’ said the old woman; ‘you are a good child, and do good to them that do ill to you. If I had had my wits about me I would have saddled myself upon that falling star and made him take me down, for wrecking my balloon, but he was too quick for me. I should have had a long fall and might have sprained my back, but for your kindness. Now I am delighted to find you so good, for I want to ask a favor for a sick man; and I know you will not refuse. I want you to come down and let a sick man ride upon your wonderful pony and be made well.’

“‘I like up here very well,’ said the child; ‘to be sure my bare foot is sometimes cold, but I forget it, I see so many beautiful things. But let us go down and help the sick man.’ When they came to the earth the moon was shining wonderfully bright, and the one-eyed woman shook her fist at the placid face of the man who looked out the front windows. ‘Who are you looking so cross at?’ asked the child. ‘At the man in the moon,’ she said. ‘Don’t do that, for he was kind to me; he took care of me nights while my pony came down to see if my father had come home from California.’ — Go on, Flora.”

“I have not thought of one word,” cried Miss Flora; “I only was thinking of what you told. Let me see — of course I ought to try, but I can’t think of one thing to say. They came to the ground, didn’t they?”

"Yes," said the princess.

"They came to the ground," said Miss Flora, "and (what shall I do with them?) they went to the rich man's house and the old witch with the one eye, fell up the steps and killed herself. (There, I'm thankful she's dead!)"

"Fell up-stairs and killed herself!" exclaimed the princess.

"When Dick sent her up to the moon you didn't say a word; just as if that could happen," said Miss Flora, laughing; "but you won't let me just tumble her up steps."

"I wanted to kill her!" said Dick excitedly.

"I told you I didn't know how," said Miss Flora good-naturedly.

"You are impolite to Flora, both of you," said Miss Minerva.
"Go on, Flora."

"She fell up the front steps," said Miss Flora, watching the princess and Dick to see how they would receive her next effort, "and hurt her foot very seriously and had the lock-jaw and died in a few minutes. Mr. Goldhouse came out with a purple velvet smoking-jacket on, and a cap with a gold tassel on it, and told them to send a brass-band to her funeral; for she had brought the little girl back and he could not forget that. Then he gave the girl her silver shoe, but she had gone barefooted so long her foot had grown too large to wear it; so he bought her a new one.

"He began to have remorse awfully for being so wicked, and he wasn't very happy even when he was dressed up and riding round in the handsomest carriage in the world. Oh! I forgot to say his nose kept bleeding all the time to punish him, and he had awful bad dreams, and everybody said good enough for him. Of course that made him wickeder. At last he was too bad for anything.—Now you take him, Princess."

This time Her Royal Highness gave a little sigh; it was her only comment on the difficulty of the situation. After a short pause she went on very well, considering the state of affairs. "One day," she said, "the little girl went to Mr. Goldhouse and said, 'Mr. Goldhouse, why don't you say your prayers? I do when I have bad dreams, and then I have beautiful ones.' He said he would and he did, and he never, never had the nose bleed again. She told him about the angel in the star and lent him her pony, and he went to see the angel. Of course after that he couldn't be bad again. He made houses for poor people, with clean front doors, and gave away clothes and lots of money. He told them about the angels in the stars, but sometimes they wouldn't believe him"—

"Then he cried," said Dick sarcastically, taking up the story as the princess paused, "he cried like everything, for he was getting pretty soft. He said he wouldn't take the pony now if they would give it to him, for he wanted to be an angel (can't do anything with this story now), but he couldn't be an angel till the enchanted pony was made white like he was before he saw it. For forty-five years he chased it all over the world to catch it, so he could wash it, but he couldn't get it. Just as soon as he would come near to it, up it would go and be only a white cloud with a red corner away up in the sky. Then he cried again—I can't tell any more!"

"I wish I hadn't killed the old witch," said Miss Flora.

"I wish you hadn't," said Dick. "Never kill off a witch or the wickedest one till the end of the story, 'cause you want somebody to make it lively. Now because you did it you must finish it."

"I'll kill 'em all," said Miss Flora; "that'll end it."

"O, no!" cried the princess; "any way, the angel came and took the little girl up to the star; she didn't die."

"Yes," said Miss Flora, "the angel came and took the girl, and she was just feeling pretty high, when they told her she couldn't come in the star because her shoes didn't mate."

"Then the angel," said Miss Minerva, "threw off both shoes, and her feet were so pretty and white they took her in, and said she might go barefooted like real angels."

"And old Goldhouse," cried Dick, "tried to ride the enchanted pony, and went up to the moon, and the man in the moon's wife grabbed him and made him clean the big lamp, so she could look out the windows."

"But," said Miss Minerva, "he declared he would only stay as a boarder and take turns at the front windows with the old man."

"But the man in the moon's wife made them both work a little rainy nights," said the princess.

"Yes," said Dick, "and old Goldhouse was so rich he said, 'Give all the money that was Mr. Goldhouse's to the folks that can tell the best story about the enchanted pony.' So everybody went to the State House and the President said, 'I will read the names of those folks that will get the money: Miss Minerva Longstreet—too rich; don't need it. Miss Flora Hill, Royal Highness Nelson, Mr. Dick Longstreet.'

"And the enchanted pony," said Miss Minerva, "still floats about in the beautiful sky. You can see him almost any day if you will take the trouble to look in the right place."

"And that is the end," said the princess.

"And the worst one we ever told, Flora," said Dick, with more truth than courtesy.

"I am sure it was my fault if you didn't do as well as you generally do," said Miss Flora, "but I think it was a splendid story — better than lots I've read that had pictures. How much better times you have here than we do at our house. I told the baby the other day that he had come to the worst house in the world if he wanted a good time. Mamma won't let me take care of him. When I have him on the floor his nurse says, 'O-o-o-o-o, Madame! see ze leetle Mademoiselle, she break ze bébé head.' Then when mamma is away she scolds him when he cries. I watch her, I tell you! and I can tell every word she says; and if I don't understand it I just tell Tristesse, and she translates it for me. She doesn't like me very well, that Nané."

"I should think your mamma would send her away if she is cross to Baby," said the princess.

"I wish she would; Tristesse and I could take care of him. He cries dreadfully sometimes when Nané gives him his bath. I wish mamma would wash him; I wish mamma was a calico-dress woman. Did you ever see the three patties' mamma? She wears calico dresses all the time, but she looks real nice. One day I was out walking with Tristesse and I was sick and Tristesse took me to her house and she gave me something to take and my hand shook so I spilled it on her dress. She said, 'Never mind, it will wash.' Since then the three patties never made me so mad."

"There's Tristesse coming in the gate," said Dick.

"She is after me," said Miss Flora; "I have had a lovely time, and I shall try story-telling with papa. He could make up awful funny ones. I shall look up when I go out for the little cloud with the red corner. Come and see me as soon as you can, Princess. I suppose Dick can't come yet. Oh! I am glad Dick didn't die."

CHAPTER XIV.

MISS FLORA MAKES A SAD MISTAKE.

AFTER many days of impatient waiting, endured by both Her Royal Highness and Miss Flora, the princess stood ringing at Mr. Hill's door. Miss Minerva had brought her as far as the gate in the pony-chaise, and when she saw her go up the steps she drove away.

A young French woman was wheeling a baby up and down the hard drive before the door.

The princess looked into the carriage and saw the baby; a white-faced little fellow with blue veins showing in his temples. The nurse had a hard brown face and glittering black eyes. Her cap was snowy white, and her trim figure would perhaps have looked different to Her Royal Highness if she had not thought of what Miss Flora had said about the baby's crying.

The carriage stopped before the door and the princess ran down the steps and kissed the baby. "Poor little fellow!" she said softly, while he raised his wondering eyes to her gentle face.

"You shall go away," said the nurse coldly; "Mees Flora ees een ze bed."

Her Royal Highness turned and would have gone away had not Tristesse appeared at the door.

"Is she very sick? Flora, I mean," she asked, taking Trissesse's hand, for the hard face of the French nurse puzzled her.

"She is not sick, dear, only she has a little headache. She will be glad to see you."

Miss Flora lay among the pillows where the princess had seen her before. She tried to smile as they came in, but tears stood in her eyes; and she said in answer to an exclamation of sympathy from the princess, "I am not sick, but I had trouble with mamma, and it always makes my head ache. She has gone off thinking me hateful, and it's all that horrid Nané's fault. Mamma thinks I want to make a fuss, and even papa said I better go to Dumpsey Hollow till I felt better." Miss Flora gave a pathetic little sniff.

"Where's that?" asked the princess, alarmed.

"That is what he calls this lounge," explained Miss Flora, wiping her eyes. "Mamma didn't use to be willing for me to go to bed after it was made up, and I had to hang on chairs, or a little bit of a sofa, when I was sick, so papa had this made with these big pillows; he used to say I had the dumps when I was sick. Now everybody in the house calls it Dumpsey Hollow."

"Of course I wouldn't want to be sick," said the princess, "but if I must be, how glad I should be to have a Dumpsey Hollow, it is so pretty."

"I should die if I didn't have pretty things," said Miss Flora.

"Die!" exclaimed Her Royal Highness, in surprise.

"Yes, die!" savagely; "but I wish I were dead. Would you like to be dead, Princess?" And she raised herself, and looked curiously into the little princess' face.

"I don't know," said Her Royal Highness, "I — I really don't know. I would like to see Heaven and my mamma, but" —

" You are a good little thing, and I am horrid. I want to die to make mamma sorry and to know for sure if Nané hurts the baby. You can know everything when you are dead, and can do everything."

" Do everything ? "

" Yes, everything. You can play, and sing, and draw, and paint, and make statues, and know Latin without studying it, and everything."

" I don't believe it," said the princess quietly.

" Why not ? " said Miss Flora sharply; for this idea had been a great comfort to her ever since she could remember.

" It wouldn't be fair " said Her Royal Highness, with dignity.

" Why not ? "

" Would it be fair for me to play on the piano as well as you, just because I went to Heaven, when I never practiced at all and you have worked so hard to learn ? " She looked anxiously at Miss Flora, hoping she would see the justice of the argument. As she seemed undecided the princess said, " And Dick tried for ever so many weeks to make a red putty sphinx for Cousin Minerva ; and he had to work awfully hard before he could make one ; now would it be fair for you to make one right off when you went to Heaven ? Do you think it would ? "

Miss Flora's love of justice was naturally very great, but this morning her poor nerves, always weak, seemed tuned to nobody's touch. She looked angrily up at the fair healthful face beside her. " I liked you so much, so very much," she cried, " but if you try to spoil Heaven, I shall hate you ! "

" I should like you, anyway, Flora, because I began to like you ; when I begin to like any one, I never stop."

"Oh! I am horrid, horrid," declared Miss Flora; "mamma says so, and I am. But she makes me miserable." Tristesse came and wiped away her tears, and said Dumpsey Hollow was no place to entertain her friend, and if she went away she would not blame her.

"She wouldn't go home if I pounded her; she is too polite. Why don't you make me polite, Tristesse?"

"I don't want you like anybody else," said the patient Tristesse, smoothing Miss Flora's rumpled hair.

"Now I will do anything you say," said Miss Flora, making a little dash at the piano and opening it. "Hear me play your song;" and she began the simple air of "Bonnie Doon." Soon the princess began to sing, and as her sweet voice arose clear and strong above the accompaniment, Miss Flora's heavy eyes brightened and she played more softly; but even then one could feel the strength that lay in her nervous little fingers, as when the wind blows gently by a singing brook you know that it may become a hurricane. She turned when the princess ceased and said, "Sing it again." But instead of playing she went suddenly to the door. "Did you hear the baby cry?" she asked of Tristesse, who was just coming in.

"Yes, I did; he has cried for some little time," said Tristesse. "I went up, but Nané has locked the nursery door."

"O, dear! will she hurt him?" said the princess.

"She will not hurt him," said Tristesse, "but he is a weak little baby, and it hurts him to cry."

"Why don't you tell her to open the door?"

"She won't mind," said Miss Flora.

"Won't mind!" said Her Royal Highness, in surprise. "Why, isn't she a servant?"

"Yes; and a horrible one. I told mamma she was a wicked woman, and she only kept her because she looked stylish. That was the trouble we had this morning. Hark! He cries just as if he was all tired out, doesn't he? Poor little angel!" Away she flew to the nursery door and pounded and told the nurse in French if she did not open the door she would break it in. The tired cry of the baby was the only answer she received. She hurried back and said, "I shall get out this bay window here and step on the vine and then get in the nursery bay window."

"O, Flossy! if the vine should break," said Tristesse. She had a bunch of keys in her hand which she had been trying on the nursery door.

"It won't break. Papa said it would hold up a robber."

"If you should fall!"

"I won't fall."

"But if your head should get dizzy!"

"I won't let it get dizzy."

"Let me go," said the princess; "I can climb, and my head is never dizzy."

"Baby wouldn't know you, and beside" — But the rest of the sentence was lost as Miss Flora passed out of the window. "One thing, Tristesse," she said, poking her head back for a minute, "I want you to watch me every moment, and when I get to the window perhaps she will push me away; if I go down you tell mamma I didn't fall; that horrible creature pushed me."

"Flossy, I shall not let you go!" cried Tristesse, reaching out after her; but the child was already beyond her reach.

They watched her as she walked quickly and fearlessly to the edge of the bay window; but when she came to see the distance

between that edge and the edge of the bay window at the nursery, with only the vine between, her weak little body failed her, and the face she turned towards Tristessee and the princess was very white; but when the cry of the baby again reached her ear, she sprang upon the vine as if her fearless little soul would reach him, no matter what became of her body. The strong vine, taken by surprise, refused her footing at first, but the thin fingers that had played "Bonnie Doon" so softly, held on now like narrow bands of steel, until the vine, seeming to understand the importance of helping her, offered safe footing so long as she chose to stay; which was so short a time, that when she stepped upon the opposite bay window it shook again as if in surprise.

"She's safe!" cried the princess joyfully.

"Let us go," said Tristessee; "she will let us in."

When they came to the nursery door they heard her talking comfortingly to the baby. "I can't let you in," she said, in answer to Tristessee, who tried to open the door; "she has gone off and taken the key. Oh! this poor baby has cried himself sick."

While Tristessee was trying a new bunch of keys, Nané came slowly up the stairs. She spoke to Tristessee, but what she said the princess could not understand; Tristessee answered her indignantly. When she unlocked the door she looked a little surprised to see Miss Flora, who flew at her, upbraiding her first in French and then in English.

"You shall never touch him again!" she declared as the nurse came towards the bed.

"Ze bébé, he not cry long?" She turned towards the princess, knowing she could make no impression on the others.

Looking straight into her hard eyes the princess said, "He has

cried a long, long time." The woman shrugged her shoulders and started again to take the baby from the bed.

"Don't you touch him!" said Miss Flora threateningly.

"No, don't you touch him!" said Tristessee quietly.

Nané pushed Miss Flora aside and took up the baby.

"I must not snatch him," said Tristessee, "we might hurt him; we can only wait patiently, Flossy, for your mother to come."

There seemed nothing but defeat for Miss Flora. Her quick mind saw her mother return and followed the smooth words the nurse would say to her. Even papa would tell her to go to Dumpsey Hollow, and Tristessee would be called fussy. Worst of all, perhaps her mother would still keep Nané for the baby's nurse.

With these thoughts rushing through her mind, she seized a large hand-glass that lay upon the table, and before Tristessee could catch her hand, she had brought it down, not upon the nurse as she intended, for Nané with cruel shrewdness, when she saw Miss Flora fly toward her, had held up the baby, thinking that rather than run the risk of striking him, she would spare her; so upon the unprotected head of the baby came the blow which Miss Flora would have endured gladly many times herself, rather than have the lightest weight of it come to him.

"You wicked, wicked woman!" said the princess, in a voice low with horror, as Tristessee took the baby from Nané; "you tried to make Flora strike him; you held him up on purpose."

"Mees Flora hav ze bad, ze grande mauvais humeur," said the French woman. "Mon Dieu! she brek ze bébé head."

After one look of anguish, Miss Flora fled from the nursery, down the stairs, crying, "Papa, papa!" She opened the front door to fly somewhere, she knew not where, and was stopped by the

firm hand of Miss Minerva. "I have killed the baby!" she cried, "I must find papa!"

"No, you have not," said Miss Minerva; "tell me the truth. What has happened?"

"I meant to strike Nané and I hit my dear little baby. Papa will hate me now!"

"Nonsense!" said Miss Minerva, taking her cold little hand and starting for the nursery; "he wouldn't cry like that if you had killed him."

"Oh! I am so glad you have come, Cousin," said the princess. "Poor Flora didn't mean to hurt him; I almost wish she had hit Nané, she is so wicked."

"Mees Flora een ze grande, bad humeur, break ze bébé head," explained the nurse, smiling politely at Miss Minerva.

"Hold your tongue!" returned Miss Minerva, without adding a smile. "If two women couldn't prevent a baby getting a bump like that, I don't want to hear either of them talk."

"I did it! I did it!" moaned Miss Flora.

"Get me some wet brown paper," said Miss Minerva.

"Please use my piece," said Miss Flora humbly, for Miss Minerva was taking a piece from Tristesse.

After the paper was put on she began to walk about with the baby in her arms. He felt safe and stopped crying. Every time she turned in her walk he looked at Miss Flora and smiled. This was more than the sister could bear, and even the princess wondered at his gentleness.

While they watched him Nané waited at the front door for Mrs. Hill, and when she came greeted her with the well-worn words, "Mees Flora break ze bébé head," whereupon the beautiful

mother ran shrieking to the nursery, and seized the quiet baby from Miss Minerva, amid moans about its fate and harsh reproaches to her little daughter.

When she lifted the paper on his forehead and saw the little bump, she asked why all stood there willing her baby should die without the doctor.

"Tristessee sent for him the first thing," said Miss Flora mournfully.

"Oh! you care nothing for him."

"Flora doesn't care for him?" said the princess, standing directly before Mrs. Hill, with an indignant flush on her earnest face, "Flora heard him crying first, and the nurse had gone away and locked the door and left him all alone; and Flora got out the window and crossed where the vine is, and Tristessee and I watched her and we thought she never would find a place for her foot; but she did and came in this window, and that wicked woman made her hit his head."

"I should have thought Tristessee could have taken care of Flora," moaned Mrs. Hill; "it is all she has to do."

"Nobody will have to take care of me any more," sobbed Miss Flora; "I am going to Dumpsey Hollow and I will stay there forever; and whatever you say I will never get out of it. Oh! I hate everybody now — everybody, everybody."

"Mees Flora hev ze grande tempers," said Nané, as the excited child darted from the nursery.

"Hold your tongue!" said Miss Minerva.

Mrs. Hill stopped her low sobbing and looked up at Miss Minerva, but just then Dr. Freshhopes entered and she renewed her grief. "Tell me, will it kill my baby?"

The doctor examined the little head tenderly, and said: "He ought not to have cried so long, Mrs. Hill; that bump wasn't worth it. It is the crying that will hurt him if anything."

"The crying came before the bump," said Miss Minerva shortly.

"How's that? Did you strike him to stop his crying?"

"Bah!" said Miss Minerva scornfully. "French nurse. Mothers nowadays must have style if they don't have any brains."

Mrs. Hill only sighed and kissed the baby; Miss Minerva's eccentricities were backed by perhaps a million of dollars, and her family was one of the oldest in the country.

"He only needs a little soothing; see, he is asleep now," said the doctor softly.

"He must not go to sleep, must he, after a blow on the head? Why, he might wake up an idiot!" said the mother.

"More likely to become an idiot if he doesn't cry less and sleep more," said the doctor. "Where is Miss Flora's nurse? Let her have the care of him to-night. I have seen her take a child through a great deal. By the way, where is my little patient? I expected to find her wild with grief because the baby was hurt."

"She hurt him herself," said Mrs. Hill coldly.

"O, no, no, no, no!" exclaimed the princess, who had been standing behind Miss Minerva.

"Didn't she strike him?" asked Mrs. Hill.

The princess hung her royal head, more in despair than shame. How could anything be plainer to her than Miss Flora's innocence? and yet it appeared so doubtful to Mrs. Hill! The cold eyes of Nané were upon her, and for the first time she felt a little afraid of her; but her love for Miss Flora and justice was strong; beside,

she had been taught to fear nothing. What Miss Flora could do impulsively, Her Royal Highness could do from a childlike principle. She held a bit of the skirt of Miss Minerva's scant black dress in her fingers, much as one might grasp a rather unattractive figure of Justice, in court, to give courage to speak only the truth; and with an expression of mingled determination and anxiety, she said:—

“Flora did hit him, but she meant to strike Nané; if Nané hadn't held him up she wouldn't have hurt him. She is only bad for striking Nané, and Nané is a wicked woman to go away and lock up the baby so Tristesse couldn't get him when he cried so long.”

“A very good little lawyer,” said the doctor; “you force me to believe the prisoner innocent before I see her. But where is she? I am afraid she has hurt herself more than any one.”

“She has gone to Dumpsey Hollow, and she says she will never come out again,” said the princess tearfully.

“I have made a good many visits to that place,” said the doctor, laughing, “I will go see her now.”

Mrs. Hill became suddenly aware that she still had her bonnet on. “Where is Nané?” she asked, rising, with the sleeping babe in her arms.

“I am afraid she understood a little too much of the evidence,” said Miss Minerva. “But tell me, Mrs. Hill, would you ever allow her to touch that baby again?”

“I must keep her until I find a better nurse,” said Mrs. Hill reproachfully.

“Why?” Miss Minerva fixed her dark eyes on the handsome face of the mother.

“Who can take care of him? Tristesse will have her hands full, for Flora is sure to be sick after this.”

“I have known mothers to look after their children themselves.”

“But you forget the night time, dear Miss Longstreet.”

Mrs. Hill was still only reproachful.

“Sure enough, I did,” said Miss Minerva grimly; and taking the princess by the hand, she left the nursery.

CHAPTER XV.

DUMPSEY HOLLOW.

"I WILL stay here forever!" As the great pillows closed protectingly around her, Miss Flora sobbed again, "forever and ever! I will never look at anybody again; I will stay here alone till I die."

"A-lone! a-lone! a-lone!" the pretty clock on the mantelpiece seemed to say, in such a monotonous tone, that each tick struck a new nerve in her tired head, while the dancing girl on the top dashed the seconds aside with her tiny foot, as she gracefully swayed from side to side, with a smile more monotonous even than a dancing-girl of flesh and blood.

"A-lone! a-lone!" repeated the pretty clock hurriedly; as if "forever" must be so very long it would help on the minute-hand as fast as possible; but the grave hour-hand seemed not to move at all.

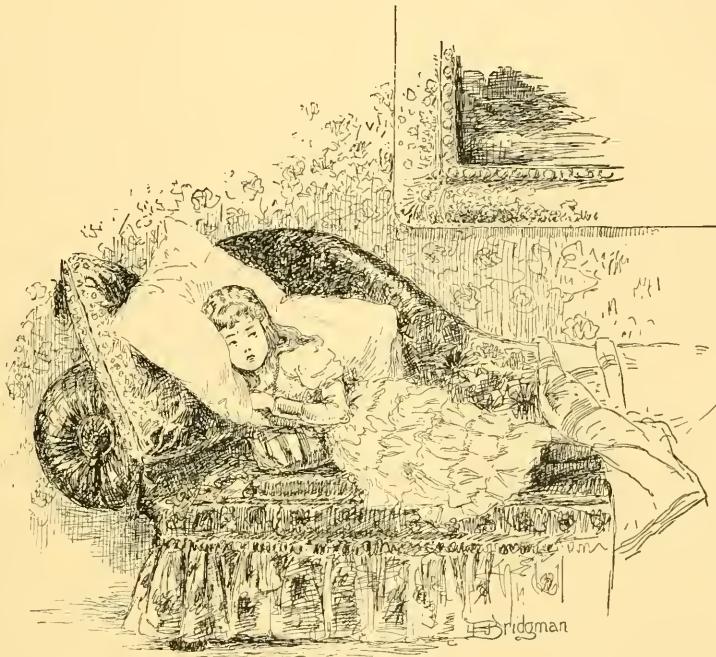
In less than five minutes Miss Flora's impulsive little heart demanded something that she loved.

Tristesse sat on the other side of the room waiting patiently for the first passionate tears to fall, before she offered any words of comfort. She knew very well at what moment she would be driven away or accepted. She smiled as she saw Miss Flora, blind with tears, run her small hand under one great pillow, then another,

while her sobs ceased for a moment, in her anxiety to reach the object of her search. Soon she dragged out a large doll, placed it on the pillow beside her and allowed a fresh installment of hot tears to fall upon its patient face.

“Baby Bunting” was like some very useful members of families, who seldom appear before company, but are sure to be called, any time, day or night, to sympathize with imprudent people who are suffering from indigestion or toothache; and who stand patiently waiting, or listening to groans, long after the more attractive members of the household are in bed.

Baby Bunting had in her day received the highest honors from Miss Flora, and she still held the first place in her every-day affections; but the tears that had fallen so many times on her up-turned face, combined with the doleful tales she had kindly listened to for so long, had faded her cheeks; and the long stays under the pillows of Dumpsey Hollow (when Miss Flora was well enough to enjoy less faithful company) had greatly injured her long yellow hair; but what there was left of her smile was as patient as ever, and her golden hair still soaked up tears of the most violent grief, as readily as in the days before she dwelt in Dumpsey Hollow. Baby Bunting had also had in her time a great many grand names. In fact, when Miss Flora’s father wanted to know what Tristesse had been reading last to his little daughter, he had only to ask, “What is Baby Bunting’s name to-day?” and the name of the last heroine was sure to be pronounced. No wonder this precious doll looked worn! In turn she had been called upon to represent heroic and unfortunate queens, sweet women martyrs, honest and bright little heroines in story-books, and once for weeks she was known only by the initials “O. D. T.” This—in spite of Mr.



FLORA IN DUMPSEY HOLLOW.

Hill's pronouncing them "Oddity" — was in remembrance of the sweet face of a young lady Miss Flora once saw in the cars; a young lady who carried a bag that bore these letters. With a strong faith that they must be the initials of the beautiful young lady's name, they were fastened to the long-suffering doll, who already, could her names be made visible upon her person, would look more like a petition for woman's suffrage, than a Baby Bunting.

"To think," sobbed Miss Flora, "that I haven't anybody left in the world but Baby Bunting!"

"And Tristesse," came a gentle voice from the window.

"Go away!" returned the broken voice from the Hollow. "You are a hu-human being; and I hate you!" Many moans.

The little clock worked on ceaselessly; the dancing girl dashed the seconds aside, but the great forever still lay before her with not yet fifteen minutes gone.

"Oh! my head, my head," sobbed the restless recluse.

A cool wet napkin was placed upon the throbbing temples, but the closed eyes did not even take a peep to see who did it. Tristesse smiled and returned to the window. She had advanced a little on the enemy.

Shortly after the doctor entered. He went directly to Dumpsey Hollow, and although its tenant turned her back and ordered him away, the good-natured doctor sat down as if he had received the politest kind of an invitation to stop awhile.

"I said, go away!" cried Miss Flora.

"How can I tell you what I came to say if I go away?"

"I won't hear you talk! I hate every hu-hu-human being in the world."

"That is your business, Miss Flora, what you think of me; I want to tell you what I think of you."

"I don't hear a word you say!" said the indignant dweller in Dumpsey Hollow, going out of sight behind a big pillow.

"Then I must say it to your doll, and she will tell you when you feel like listening."

Baby Bunting immediately disappeared behind another pillow.

"I will be heard," said the persistent doctor; "I will talk to Tristesse." Turning towards the window he continued: "I want to say that I think Miss Flora was a very brave little girl to-day. I think the baby will have a new nurse; I shall tell Mr. Hill myself that unless he has a proper nurse I will not come when the baby is sick."

"Dr. Grey can," sobbed a voice from the Hollow.

"Dr. Grey would be afraid of some of my patients; do you suppose he would dare to visit Dumpsey Hollow?"

"He needn't trouble himself about me," said Flora, "nor any other human being; I shall never have—never have any doctor again; I shall stay here till I die, alone. I hate everybody!"

"I don't wonder," said the doctor coolly; "I think I should if I were you."

A disfigured little face arose a moment from the pillows. "You—you don't mean it; you are making fun." Then, as if a person who had retired from the world forever ought not to care even for a doctor's praise or censure, it disappeared again.

"I never make fun alone, Miss Flora. I understand all about your trouble. I suppose it was wrong to strike at that miserable French woman"—

"I wish I had hit her," cried the owner of the Hollow.

"Never mind that now," said the doctor, laughing. "I am not here to tell you what is right and wrong, but to make you well. I am not afraid that you will ever strike anybody again, but I am afraid you will have to suffer longer than any one else for this, unless you stop crying and go to bed like a good little girl."

"I am going to stay here till I die."

"How funny you will look when you are an old lady, looking out over those pillows."

"I shall die be-before I am old."

"No, you won't," he said gently, feeling her pulse; "little girls with hot tempers often make the loveliest and coolest old ladies."

His voice was very kind, and his strong hand so gentle as he held her thin wrist, that she turned, and, resting, her wet face on it, moaned, "I want to die very soon."

"That's not remarkable at all," he said, smoothing the damp hair from the tear-stained face; "I knew a great strong fellow once, who was taken sick far away from home, and he cried and wished himself dead."

A spasmodic sigh expressed the interest and perhaps sympathy which his patient felt for the great fellow, as the doctor paused.

"Well," said Miss Flora impatiently, raising her head a little, "why don't you tell the rest?"

"I thought you would not care for the rest, as he did not die; but I will tell you. He was away studying; he grew sick, poor and discouraged; his Dumpsey Hollow was a worn-out bed in a cheap inn. As he lay there one day, sick, weak and crying, waiting and hoping to die very soon, like a great good-for-nothing as he was, a letter came from over the sea. He knew it was from his mother, in a little village in America. He thought it would not

take long, and perhaps he better read it before he died. So he opened it and read: ‘ My beloved son: believe in God and don’t be a coward! I can send you nothing.’ Well, it aroused the great boy, and he didn’t die; he began to work very hard for his mother; but it didn’t hurt him any.”

Miss Flora was on the point of asking something about the meeting of the mother and son, when she heard her father’s voice at the door. She had intended to leave the world forever; to be nothing but a dumb recluse dwelling in Dumpsey Hollow until she died, and here she was listening with all her heart to a story; and there stood her father watching her with the same smile he always wore when he came to see her; so he could not have heard yet, she thought, how wicked she had been. Perhaps it would be time to leave the world, which still held many pleasures, after he had been told all. But the sight of his dear face started the hot tears again. She would gladly have dropped the doctor’s hand, and disappeared behind the pillows, but he held her firmly, and the tears that belonged on Baby Bunting stole unnoticed over his white wristband.

“ I have hurt the baby dreadfully,” she began, as soon as Mr. Hill crossed the door-sill. It seemed almost like ancient history to her now. She felt that it must have been a long, long time ago that she struck that dreadful blow.

“ Don’t go all over that again, Flossy,” said her father; “ I have already heard it from everybody in the house, and from Miss Long-street and the little queen.”

“ Queen, papa!”

“ That little thing they call Royal Highness, handsome enough for a queen — better looking than any queen I ever saw.”

" You mean Princess, papa."

" That's it; the princess. I though their stories didn't hang together very well, but hers was straight to the point as a bee-line. Why, she made me see you, Flossy, when you crossed to the nursery, you naughty girl, you! and when she told about Nané, you would have thought she sat upon her throne and was pointing out her wickedest subject."

" She knew I didn't mean to hurt him," sighed Miss Flora, as she threw herself into her father's arms.

" There, don't worry any more," said Mr. Hill, " the baby will forgive you. Don't fret any more; even Dumpsey Hollow can't stand everything. Besides, I had something to tell you, but all this hullabaloo has driven it out of my head."

" See you to-morrow, if you have a headache; but you won't be so foolish," said the doctor, glancing at his watch.

As he reached the door Miss Flora said, " You didn't tell me what that boy's mother's name was."

The doctor hesitated, then said with a frank smile: " Her name is Alice Freshhopes. I will take you to see her sometime."

" I love him!" declared Miss Flora vehemently, when they heard the doctor's carriage drive away.

" Then you will do as he says," said Tristessee, " and he told me to have you in bed in five minutes."

" Yes, I will go, Tristessee, now papa is here, and knows it all, and doesn't hate me."

While Tristessee put her to bed, Mr. Hill began to talk to her. " Does the little queen go to school, Flossy?"

" No; she learns everything at home, and Dick, too; but they are going to school pretty soon, Dick says."

"Do you think I could get up a school here in town for a beautiful teacher who knows everything?"

"Who is she?" Miss Flora looked severely at her father, as she tucked Baby Bunting under the bedclothes, just as if they had been selecting a teacher for this very child.

"She is a daughter of a cousin of mine," said Mr. Hill. "Her father was a very good man, although, I must say, Flossy, her mother never pleased me much; but she herself is a good teacher and a beautiful young lady. How many children could we get for her to begin with, do you think?"

"Princess and Dick and me; that makes three. We won't have Cora Peterson, we don't like her very well, and the three patties couldn't afford it."

"Quite a school!" said her father, laughing.

"Is she awful poor, papa?"

"Pretty poor and pretty proud, I guess, Flossy."

"Well, then, couldn't I take Alice Freshhopes along and call her a scholar, and she could charge for two of us?"

"Who is Alice Freshhopes?"

"That's Baby Bunting's new name. I never take her anywhere now, and I really don't want the princess to see her, but I would take her if you wanted to give her more money. What's her name?"

"Daisy Tucker."

"She'll have to change that," said Miss Flora, drawing her brows shrewdly together. "Daisy! what a name for a school teacher! Dick wouldn't mind her."

"Not if a woman named Minerva told him to obey her?"

"Isn't she splendid — Miss Minerva?"

"She is the most sensible, and the worst-dressed woman in the State, Flossy."

"Don't you dare say that, Papa Hill! She is good, and splendid, and beautiful, if she doesn't wear overskirts."

Mr. Hill laughed aloud.

"The doctor said Flora must not be excited," said Mrs. Hill, coming in while they were laughing together; "she may have a nervous fever, he said. I am sure he scolded me enough, but he never treats me with much respect. After this I shall send for Dr. Grey."

Mr. Hill drew the clothes close up to the little sallow face that was turned towards him, and said, "Mamma is right, Flossy, you must be quiet and go to sleep; and Alice Freshhopes must rest, too, or she will never look strong enough to go to school with that young Dick." Then he went to Dumpsey Hollow, and hiding something under the pillows, said, "Some day when you are lonesome and want the queen, and she can't come, you may see what I have put here." He came back to the bed—for Miss Flora's dark, heavy eyes were following him languidly as he moved—and said, cheerfully, "Don't stay long in bed, for Dumpsey Hollow will feel slighted."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THREE LITTLE PATTIES AT HOME.

“THERE is a happy land,” sang the largest patty as she lifted from the stove a kettle nearly as large as herself, and renewed the hot water in the dish-pan.

“—Is a happy land,” sang the second patty, like a loud echo, swinging the dish-towel merrily.

“—Happy land,” piped the smallest patty, like a distinct but distant echo of an echo.

The two elder sisters had sacrificed their dear little pigtales, in hope of curls; and their heads appeared twice the natural size, for those comely, well-bred tails were twisted in paper knots all over their heads. When they went to bed the night before their round eyes had looked as if almost pulled up by the roots, but it may have been in astonishment because the smallest patty refused to give up her pigtail, even for curls; and although it was not the first time she had refused to pipe “Yea, yea,” to what her sisters had said, they appeared very much amazed.

“Isn’t ma kind?” said Patty Number One.

“Isn’t she?” said Patty Second, turning towards the obstinate wearer of the braid.

“Of course her is,” said Patty Third, emerging from the closet where she was putting the plates on the lowest shelf.

"We can dress up our dolls and sit them round the parlor, then it will look as if we had a large party," said Patty First.

"And we can tell the princess to bring hers," said Patty Second.

"And I'll bring mine, Lucy," said Patty Third.

The second patty turned her round eyes upon her elder sister significantly.

"No," said Patty First very firmly, "Lucy can't come."

Patty Third made no reply, but coolly placing the plate she was about to take to the lowest shelf back upon the table, she left the little kitchen.

"I knew when she wouldn't have her hair curled last night that something would happen," said Patty First.

"I knew it," said Patty Second.

"She's awful cunning."

"Yes, she is."

"She looks better than we do now," said Patty First, hopping up to look in the glass in the clock.

"Yes, she does," said Patty Second, waiting for a chance at the glass.

"But she can't bring Lucy."

"No, she can't bring Lucy."

"She's gone to tell ma, I s'pose," said Patty First.

"Of course she has," from Patty Second.

"Of course she hav'n't," from Patty Third, coming in, with the uninvited Lucy dangling helplessly over one arm, as if that disreputable young person had fainted at the idea of being dragged where she was not wanted.

"Of course," said Patty First, "you don't want the princess to see such a looking doll as that, when she is so rich."

"When she is so rich you wouldn't show her that looking thing, would you?" said Patty Second.

The smallest patty made no reply; but as she sat down in her little rocking-chair, with her back toward her sisters, with Lucy's limp body braced up against her stout little shoulder, and that defiant little pigtail swaying as she rocked, how could they help feeling that Lucy might in some way get in and show herself to Her Royal Highness?

"There comes ma, and we'll ask her about it," said Patty First, as a bright-faced woman entered the room. She was so like the three children that one would almost expect to see patties of all sizes coming to fit in and make a flight of patty steps.

"Shall Lucy come to the party?" said Patty First.

"You won't let her, will you, ma?" said Patty Second solemnly.

Rock, rock, from Patty Third, who still forced poor Lucy to face them all over her shoulder.

"If Lucy wants to go, I should let her," said the mother.

"How can you say so, ma! Why, she is perfectly horrid, and her arms are half off, and she can't see out of one eye. I wouldn't have the princess see her for dollars!" said Patty First.

"Nor I, for one hundred dollars," said Patty Second.

"Her arms is pinned up," said Patty Third coldly.

"But just see how she looks, dear," said Patty First, kneeling before the little rocker and trying to take the despised Lucy, who was tightly held by the faithful Patty Third. "Only see! one eye gone."

"Well, it's inside her; if you want me to, I'll wattle her, and the princess can hear it, if she will put her ear on her tunic."

"O, ma, ma!" cried Patty Second in despair, as she pictured to

herself her small sister entertaining Her Royal Highness with poor Lucy's infirmities, "shall she bring her?"

The mother laughed and pointed to the dishes.

"I can't do any work till you tell me she shall not bring that doll into the parlor," said Patty First.

"Nor I can't," said Patty Second.

"I see I must finish, for there is no more than time now for you to get your curls down, and your clean aprons on."

"And our dolls dressed, ma," said Patty First.

"And our sashes on," said Patty Second.

"But it is too bad," said Patty First, "for you to wash the dishes when you had to make the cake and ice-cream."

"I think it's a shame!" said Patty Second.

"I don't dess up 'cause I ain't going," said Patty Third, as her sisters left the kitchen.

At three o'clock the princess came, and was met by Patties One and Two, neatly dressed in white aprons and broad blue sashes. Their curls looked as if there had been a misunderstanding, which must have grown almost into a dispute, as to where "the party" was to be, for while some pointed persistently one way, others seemed started for quite the opposite direction.

The princess was glad that Dick had not come, for she feared in spite of his good heart he might have laughed at the patties' curls.

As they pushed her into the cheerful little parlor where some stiff, well-dressed dolls sat, on a long hair-cloth sofa, Her Royal Highness asked for the third patty.

"She is in the kitchen with ma; she will come pretty soon," said Patty First.

"She's got to have a clean apron on first," said Patty Second; "she will come pretty soon."

"I thought," said Patty First, "we should get the dishes done and dressed up in time to go up and ask you to bring your doll."

"But we didn't," said Patty Second.

"She couldn't come, I'm afraid," said the princess, laughing; "for Dick took her to play she was a witch, and he hung her on a tree, and forgot to bring her in; and when Cousin Minerva found her she was soaking wet; but I like her now better than a new one."

"S'pose you got 'tached to her," said Patty First primly.

"S'pose so," said Patty Second.

The smallest patty looked in the door a moment and then ran quickly away. Her sisters dared to hope their ma had hidden Lucy.

"Isn't it funny," said the princess, "I don't know your names yet? I never saw you very many times, and Flora calls you the three p"— Her Royal Highness paused; she was thinking of the many absurd remarks Miss Flora had made at their expense. These kind little creatures, who were so anxious to be polite to her, that they were at this very moment sitting on the very edge of stiff, high chairs, with their plump little legs dangling quite helplessly, and their hands folded in precisely the same manner, just below their broad sashes.

"She calls us the three what?" said Patty First.

"Three what?" from Patty Second.

"The three patties," said the princess, laughing. "She always says something funny, but she doesn't mean anything,—anything serious."

"But only one of us is Patty," said Patty First, "that's me. She," pointing to Patty Second, who wriggled very much at having royal eyes fixed upon her, "is named Polly. I was named for pa's ma, and Polly was named for ma's ma."

"And what is your little sister's name?" asked the princess, relieved to find she had not brought Miss Flora into difficulty.

"Her name is Dolly," said Patty; "pa was sorry she couldn't have a name what started with a P, but we didn't have any more grandmas."

"No; we only had two grandmas," said Polly.

"Ma wanted to call Dolly Edith Estelle," said Patty, "for two girls she knew at her boarding-school; ain't that a beautiful name? But pa said he rather have a name he knew something about, so he named her Dolly; that's ma's name."

Just then the owner of ma's name came slowly into the room. She held something, covered with a large towel, in one hand, and dragged her small rocking-chair with the other. Seating herself at a respectful distance from the princess, she lay the something that was covered with the towel across her lap, and her two sisters had no difficulty in tracing with their eyes, through the thin linen, the outline of the uninvited Lucy.

"I wondered where you were, Dolly," said the princess.

"I binged mine Lucy," said Dolly, with honest dignity, as if she wished Her Royal Highness to know that the towel was not an intention to deceive, but rather a polite attempt to spare her rich guest from the disagreeable sight of a one-eyed doll.

"Oh! let me see her," said the princess, beginning to enjoy herself, as she saw a black foot without shoe or stocking, poking out from one side of the towel.

"Please don't look at her!" cried Patty.

"Oh! please don't," echoed Polly.

Dolly covered the black foot hastily, saying, "Lucy wants some cake and ice-keam; Patty didn't 'vite her, Polly didn't 'vite her; I 'vite her."

"Why can't I see her?" said the princess.

"She isn't fit to be seen," said Patty. "She is the worst-looking doll I ever saw. I told her not to bring her."

"She is awful," said Polly; "I told her not to bring her."

"She never was so naughty before," said Patty.

"I don't think that was very naughty," said the princess.

The little rocking-chair was pushed along a foot or so nearer royalty.

"I must go see ma a minute," said Patty.

"I must," said Polly, fearing to be left in charge of the independent Dolly, lest she might see fit to unveil the terrible Lucy in her sister's absence.

"No, you mustn't go," said Patty, making all manner of signs behind the princess to make Polly understand that she must guard the honor of the family while she was gone, which was as good as lost if left in Dolly's care.

"You can bofe go," said Dolly indulgently; "I will see to the p'incess myself."

"Ma, ma, we are having a horrid time," said Patty, running to the kitchen where her mother was putting sugar-plums on a little cake.

"Yes, horrid, ma," said Polly, coming in just behind her sister.

"If you don't have a good time it must be the princess's fault,"

said her mother, "for my little girls always have a good time by themselves."

"It ain't her fault," said Patty, "for she ain't proud a bit."

"Only but she's so rich," said Polly, her round eyes open so



LUCY UNVEILED.

wide that Patty, discouraged as she was, felt obliged to laugh a little.

"You have explained it all now, my silly little Polly! You keep thinking the princess is rich, and has grander things than you; that makes you discontented with what you have to offer her. But remember this: no matter who comes to see you, do

your best to please them. No matter if it be a king, he could do no more for you. Do you hear Dolly laugh? She is having a good time. Now go back, and play just as you do when you don't have company, and see if you don't have a good time, and the princess, too. Play 'I'm going traveling,' for one thing."

"That's only studying geog'phy," said Polly.

"But it's fun," said Patty.

"Kind o' fun," said Polly.

When they went back they found the princess and Dolly together in the great chair, their eyes dancing with fun, and unveiled between them, looking as proud as she could out of one eye, sat the condemned Lucy.

"P'incess pull off the towler," said Dolly, as if that ought to settle the difficulty satisfactorily to everybody. "And P'incess says her eye ain't in her tunic, it in her head." This last was added proudly, as if she would like to know where Lucy's eye belonged, if not in her head.

They all laughed merrily, and Patty soon found it quite easy to propose anything, even "studying geog'phy," and asked if they would like to play "I'm going a-traveling."

"Pa made it up," said Polly. "We had so many bad marks 'cause we didn't know geog'phy places. We had to play it every night when he came home."

"The way we do it," explained Patty, "we put a row of chairs in the middle of the room, and play they are cars. Then first Dolly is the conductor. We don't go very far then, you know, because she is little and never studied much; but when pa is the conductor we can go anywhere. The first mistake the conductor makes he has to lose his place, and another one has it. Polly can

start from this very town and go way to California, and call out every place without one mistake." Polly blushed, and looked as uncomfortable as if Patty had said she always lost her position at the first stopping place. "Sometimes, you know, we have to go in a steamer," continued Patty, "and the other day we went to Europe and pa had to take the geog'phy to tell the places."

"That is a splendid play," said the princess; "but I couldn't be conductor a very long time only in the New England States; Cousin Minerva kept me on the New England States ever so many days."

Such rapid traveling was never known before! Her Royal Highness was carried from Florida's warm coast to Greenland and Iceland without so much as time to snatch an extra wrap. She crossed the Atlantic in the cars, and was not at all astonished when the energetic conductor, who was also acting as brakeman, shouted aloud, "England! change cars for London! only you ought to have come in a steamboat," and whisked her out, and landed her as dry as a bone somewhere in England, she knew not where. But with Polly on one side of her, and Dolly and "mine Lucy" on the other, she started with perfect trust in her heart to find the London cars.

"Perhaps we shall go to a pay school," said the conductor of the London train, as they took their seats for London town; "Mr. Hill came to ask pa if we could."

"Pa say we're too poor," said Dolly, anxious to offer some information.

"Anyway, he's going to buy a mortgage," said Polly.

"I don't believe we can go," said Patty. "Pa has to work so hard now that ma won't have a washwoman all the time."

"I do wish you could go," said the princess; "Dick and I are going. I suppose it won't start till Flora gets well."

"The doctor made Flora have her hair cut off yesterday," said Polly; "and Mr. Hill told ma she wouldn't let any one cut it but her pa, and he gave her a little gold watch."

"I'd have mine cut—fighting cut—for a gold watch, would you?" said Patty.

"Poor Flora!" said the princess, tears coming to her eyes.

"She was awful silly 'bout being dressed up, and having her hair crimped," said Polly, as if pride must have a fall.

"But I like her," said Patty.

"I like her," said Polly.

"An' I like her," said Dolly.

Her Royal Highness looked so sad Patty concluded not to go to London, and said suddenly, "I guess you never heard Polly whistle. Will you whistle for the princess, Polly?"

The second patty became so red and looked so distressed the princess was almost alarmed, and begged that Polly should not whistle, unless she really wanted to very much.

Polly looked entreatingly at Patty, who said she thought it very mean if Polly didn't whistle; adding kindly that she could turn her back if she would rather.

Polly turned her face to the wall and began to whistle the Marseillaise Hymn, in a very low and unmartial manner; but before long it grew clearer, and soon quite piercing.

"I feel just like marching, and holding up a flag," said the princess, clapping her hands.

"I wish you could hear her whistle with a piano," said Patty proudly.

They induced her to whistle many times, but always with her back to the princess.

The patties were so good-natured and kind, the princess forgot Miss Flora for a while, and when she went home after as merry an afternoon as she had ever spent, she reproved herself for forgetting that her little friend was unhappy. "I must do something for her," she whispered to herself; "I must, and I will!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A ROYAL SACRIFICE.

THE princess appeared absent-minded for some days after her visit to the three patties. Even talking over the new school, which had been a great delight to her for weeks, had little if any interest for her now; and she smiled absently when Dick wondered if the new schoolteacher would wear a big bustle and a bang. He made some very clever sketches of the teacher he would obey and the one he would not obey. The first being a tall, vigorous-looking lady in a short, straight gown, with severe expression, and a book in one hand and a sphinx in the other. Under this was written, "My teacher. Only one knows anything."

The other represented a fashionable young lady, with trailing skirts and banged hair, holding a small dog by a string. Under this was written, "Schoolmarm Daisy."

The princess showed the two sketches to her grandmother, who said Dick was a bad boy, but she must confess he could draw well.

"Haven't I been pretty good since I hung the doll?" he asked, throwing down his drawing and looking into her face. He stood bending over with a hand upon each knee, his head on one side, and his face full of mischief and repentance.

"Pretty good," she said, "if it is being pretty good to make whiskers on Lady Macbeth in the best Shakespeare."

"I am orful, orful sorry, but she looked just like she ought to have 'em. I don't think Miss Minerva ought to let me have a pencil in the parlor. Why, one day, don't you think, I was just starting a petticoat on your marble Venus, and Jane stopped me. But since then I have been pretty good, don't you think so?"

"That could have been washed off," said the grandmother, laughing; "but Lady Macbeth's whiskers you knew would spoil the picture."

"If I get the whiskers all off, clean as a whistle, may I make the petticoat?" His head was pointed towards the long parlor, like an arrow at a target, as if he expected the grandmother to say, "Shoot!" and with a bound he would land beside poor Venus and begin his charitable work.

The grandmother laughed until her eyes filled with tears. "Yes, you may make her a petticoat, if you will have a very soft pencil; but don't try now to help poor Lady Macbeth. Remember, now, don't touch her."

"You are beginning to spoil that boy," said Miss Minerva, picking up the sketches of the two schoolteachers. But any one could see that she was quite willing to pardon the grandmother.

"I would not have believed once that I could ever laugh at his pranks, or forget where he came from," returned the grandmother, wiping her eyes; "but he is so honest, I can't help liking him a little."

Jane came in to say Miss Flora's maid had come to see the princess.

"Tell her to come here," said the grandmother, still smiling.

"Is Flora well yet?" asked the princess as soon as Tristesse appeared at the door.

"She is dressed to-day," said Tristessee, "and by to-morrow she will be able to see you; but she is weak, the poor little thing! and it makes her foolish. She is afraid you will laugh at her cropped head. I would not speak anything about it if I were you, Miss Princess."

"I can't go to-morrow, but I will the next day," said the princess.

"Why can't you go to-morrow?" said the grandmother.

"Because — papa is gone away."

"But your father was not invited," said Miss Minerva.

"I will go the day after papa comes home," said the princess.

"She will be quite bright by that time," said Tristessee; and she hurried back to Miss Flora, hoping soon her little charge might look as healthy as Her Royal Highness.

The next day Jack came home, and for some time he was closeted with the princess. Whenever any one came upon them suddenly she would raise her finger significantly.

"What is the matter with Princess?" said the grandmother, after one of these solemn warnings.

"I believe she is getting up a surprise party for us," said Miss Minerva.

The next day the grandmother advised the princess to go early to see Miss Flora, before she was tired sitting up, and to be very kind and patient all the time she staid.

"I will! I will!" declared Her Royal Highness. "Where is papa? He is going to take me."

After they had started she ran back, and looked in such a mysterious way into her grandmother's eyes as she kissed her, that the old lady was on the point of questioning her, but she thought of the surprise party, and said nothing.

"Here's old skinny bones over in Dumpsey Hollow."

"It is a long time since I saw you, and I can't see you now," said the princess, groping her way with outstretched hands. "Why, can't you have any light yet, Flora?"

"I won't let you see me," said Miss Flora. "I made Tristesse shut all up when she saw you coming. Mamma cries 'cause I look so bad; guess you couldn't stand it."

"Guess I could!" said the princess stoutly; "beside, I've got something to show you."

"Leave it," said Miss Flora coolly.

The princess laughed.

"I want to see you dreadfully," said Miss Flora, reaching out the thinnest little hand the princess had ever touched.

"I want to see you more," said the princess, dropping the little bird's claw, "and I will!"

"I won't be silly, Royal Highness, but I am so homely."

"Dear me," said the princess, drawing back a heavy curtain, "there goes one shade up! and there goes another; here is the window at last, and the outside blinds are shut. When shall I find the light?" She pushed open the heavy blind and a broad sunbeam shot in and fell upon Dumpsey Hollow. It lingered lovingly upon Miss Flora's thin face and cropped head, and it went straight into her blinking eyes, as if it would have her understand that nothing could grow so homely that God's sunshine would refuse to caress it.

"Now I can see you," said Her Royal Highness, turning from the window; but as she came nearer Miss Flora gave a cry of pain and covered her eyes, as if something had hurt them more than the sunshine.

"O, Princess! your curls, your beautiful, darling curls."

Her Royal Highness laughed merrily and ran her fingers through the short little tufts of curls that clung closely to her head as if they had no idea of leaving her.

"Oh! you horrid girl; I know what you've done: you cut them off to please me; I—I hate you for it!"

"Why, Flora," said the princess, who had really believed Miss Flora would be delighted with her sacrifice, "I thought you wouldn't mind having yours cut so much, if I had mine cut, too."

"You thought I was a pig—a horrid mean pig," groaned Miss Flora, just taking a peep at the princess through her fingers.

"Why, I did not!" cried Her Royal Highness. "I wanted to do something to please you, because you have been so sick."

Miss Flora took down her hands and gazed at her very steadily for a moment. There was a tear in each sunken eye. "You couldn't look very homely, anyway; but you look as homely as you ever could. If I had your curls, I wouldn't cut them off for anything in the world. Oh! they were so pretty," she said sadly. Then she continued savagely, "Do you suppose I want everybody to look like fury because I do?"

"I thought it would be fun for us to see our hair grow together. We shall go to school together, and begin Latin together, and do everything just alike."

"Cora Peterson's going," said Miss Flora. "Horrid thing! I told papa we didn't want her, but he said I must not try to have such a fine school that nobody could go but you and me, because his poor little cousin wouldn't make enough to live very well, with only two scholars. If the patties go he has got ten scholars; and I hope they will go, for they are pretty decent if they are poor."

"They are just as polite as they can be," said the princess earnestly. "If they do go their papa will have to work fearfully hard, for Patty told me so."

"Which patty?" said Miss Flora, laughing.

"Why, didn't you know that the biggest patty is really named Patty?"

"Go 'way!" said Miss Flora.

"She is, truly; and when I said you called them the three patties"—

"O, glory, Princess! you didn't tell them that?"

"Yes, I did," said Her Royal Highness solemnly; "wasn't it too bad? And Patty said, 'But only one of us is Patty.' They are named Patty and Polly and Dolly."

"O, my good gracious me!" cried Miss Flora, quite prostrated; "what horrible names."

"I like them," said the princess; "they seem just right for them."

"It's better than being the three patties, I suppose," said Miss Flora.

"Dolly is just as cunning as she can be, Flora; and she's got the worst-looking doll you ever saw named 'mine Lucy,' with only one eye. She brought it in all covered up with a towel, because they told her not to let me see it. Wasn't that cunning?"

Miss Flora cast her eye anxiously about Dumpsey Hollow, to see if a foot or hand or stray lock of tangled hair belonging to a certain Miss Bunting, was anywhere visible. This reminded her of something else, and she said, "I have something to show you, Princess." At the same time she pulled a pretty box out from under the pillows.

"I thought you were going to show me your new watch, but that box is too big for a watch," said the princess, while Miss Flora was polishing the top with her handkerchief.

"My watch has gone to have my name on it; papa gave me this the last time you were here before I was sick. Now you see if this wasn't funny: papa put this in Dumpsey Hollow, and told me that sometime when I was lonesome and wanted to see you, I might see what it was. I forgot all about it when I was sick. But when you wouldn't come yesterday when I wanted you, I came here to Dumpsey Hollow, and then I suddenly remembered what papa said. I took it out, and what do you think? It was this little music-box. I wound it up and it began to play—just listen and hear what!" She wound up the music-box and it began to play very softly and sweetly, "Bonnie Doon."

The princess clapped her hands. "Why, it almost says the words, Flora."

"It does say them," said Miss Flora. "I can follow every word; see: 'How—can—ye—chant—ye—little—birds—'"

"It is the loveliest thing I ever heard," said Her Royal Highness.

"Is it?" said Miss Flora suddenly.

"If I were you I would rather have it than the watch."

"Would you truly, Princess? Then I shall give it to you."

"O, no!" said Her Royal Highness, in a dignified manner.

"But you shall have it!" declared Miss Flora.

"I wouldn't take it away from you; beside, I know Grandmamma wouldn't let me take it."

"I hate anybody that does great things for other folks and then won't let other folks do anything for them."

" You hate me pretty often, don't you ? " said the princess, with a smile.

" I hate anybody that's so proud."

" Why, you don't think I'm proud, do you, Flora ? "

" Will you take the music-box ? "

" I don't want to take it away from you ; and if I did, I know my grandma would make me bring it back."

" Will you take it ? " continued Miss Flora persistently.

" I — rather not, if you please, Flora."

" Go have your head all cut off the next time," cried Miss Flora, " and then never let me do anything for you — you proud, stuck-up thing ! " The princess turned away, that Miss Flora might not see the tears gathering in her eyes.

" That's a pleasant expression for the first your new teacher hears," said Mr. Hill, coming in with a young lady and Mrs. Hill. " Who is so stuck up, Flossy ? "

" Papa, just look at her head ! " Miss Flora noticed no one but her father. " See ! her lovely curls are all gone — all cut off — because she thought I wouldn't feel so bad about my homely old hair ; now she won't let me give her my music-box."

" Come here, little queen," said Mr. Hill, drawing the princess from behind the curtain. Then his eye fell on her curly head bathed in the sunshine, and he said, " They couldn't tumble your whole crown off, could they ? " He spoke abruptly, as Miss Flora often did when she wanted to cry, and said instead " I hate you ! "

" Oh ! what a shame," said Mrs. Hill. " Who allowed you to do it, Princess ? "

" Papa took me this morning and had it cut ; nobody else knows it."

Mr. Hill led her to the young lady who had been watching the children curiously. "This is one of your scholars, Miss Tucker," he said, "that little girl that calls names is another."

The princess thought the new teacher's face the most beautiful she had ever seen.

"How do you like her looks?" said Mr. Hill, for she stood gazing at the young lady without a word.

"I think she is beautiful," she said simply; "and if she would only let Dick draw her I know he would mind her."

Miss Flora raised her head for an examination of the school-mistress, and whispered suddenly, "Come here, quick, papa!" And when her father stood beside her, she drew his head down and whispered, "It's O. D. T., papa!"

He laughed heartily, and declared so good a joke ought to be explained; but Miss Flora could not bear the idea of Baby Bunting's being dragged before eyes that might gaze with levity upon her faithful old face, so he only explained that Flossy had seen Miss Tucker once in the cars, and had talked a great deal about her.

Mr. and Mrs. Hill soon left Miss Tucker to get acquainted with the children, and they must have made the most of the opportunity, for an hour later when the princess drove home with her father, she told him that she and Flora were perfectly delighted with the new teacher, and Flora had made up her mind never to call her anything that wasn't perfectly beautiful.

With her head full of the new teacher she came into the room where her grandmother and Miss Minerva sat. Going directly to her grandmother she began a description of Miss Tucker.

"Is your hair pinned up, Princess?" said the grandmother,

looking under her hat, for she often fastened up the long curls to get them out of the way.

"Why, papa, I forgot!" Off came her hat, and the little cropped head popped itself under the grandmother's nose.

"Moses! ain't she homely, though!" cried Dick.

"Jack, Jack, how could you!" the grandmother looked so piteously at her son that the princess for the first time felt something like a regret shoot through her heart.

"It was something I thought I better let her decide for herself, mother," said Jack, dropping the long shining curls into the grandmother's lap.

She took them up, one by one, and let them curl around her finger.

"It will soon be warm," said Jack; "it is better for her." Then he told about Miss Flora, and why it had been done, and declared he would rather see the cropped head than the curls.

"Indeed," said Miss Minerva, "ten full-bottomed wigs would not look so handsome to me as her cropped little pate does now."

This moved Dick to throw his arms around the princess' neck, much as if he intended to strangle her for misconduct, and give her a kiss that would not have sounded weak at a Fourth of July celebration.

The grandmother said nothing, but still sat winding the severed curls about her finger.

At this very moment, could they have looked in upon Miss Flora, they would have seen her holding Baby Bunting with one hand, while with the other she took a pair of sharp shears from Tristesse, and with a little grimace of pain, cut the tangled golden hair quite close to the head of the uncomplaining Bunting; and they

might have heard her say, "No matter who I like after this, Tristessee, this doll will always be named The Queer Little Princess! It is all I can do, Tristessee; it isn't much, and I shall never tell Princess I did it; but I don't feel quite so mean now." She looked regretfully at Bunting for a moment, then said, "Poor little Princess Hill!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISS TUCKER'S SCHOOL.

THE place where Miss Tucker was to have her school proved to be a picturesque old house with a long garden, or orchard, behind it. The landlord called it garden and orchard. There were many gnarled old apple-trees there, long past bearing fruit, that stretched their branches, sometimes protectingly, sometimes menacingly, towards the bright impudent phlox and gay hollyhock that tried always to play with the sunshine that fell between the branches. These old trees seemed like grandmothers who caressed or threatened their merry grandchildren, according to their moods. At the extreme end of the garden, or orchard, stood a large weeping willow, that looked like a melancholy maiden aunt who refused to be comforted, drooping always near the social old apple-trees and the merry flowers.

Here and there were small circles of box, where once perhaps pansies grew; the modest mignonette was tracked by the sweet breath it could not hide; and dainty fuschia blossoms had drooped lovingly over the gentle hand that trained them. There was no sign now of any such flowers, yet the little borders stood up stiffly, as if they still protected something rare.

The day Miss Tucker and her mother moved to this place the early summer sun had lighted it up as he only can do when he

means to fascinate anybody. Miss Tucker had begged her mother to just step into the garden and see how beautiful it was ; but Mrs. Tucker was not the sort of a person who approved of taking a step to see anything, no matter how beautiful. She only looked reproachfully at her beautiful daughter and made a sign for their little maid, a child "goin' on fourteen," but very small of her age, to pull down the shade near the window where she sat, and, drawing her shawl a little nearer her ears, she lay back and communed with the ceiling.

"I am so glad the sun shines the first time the children come," said Miss Tucker, the day she was to begin her little school.

"I don't know as it makes any difference," said her mother languidly ; "I think sometimes children make more noise when it is pleasant than when it rains."

"It looks so pretty here when the sun shines, and I should like to have it look pretty the first time they see it," said the daughter cheerfully.

"I don't think it makes any difference, Daisy ; it's dreadful to think of, anyway, sun or no sun."

"I am sure I am very thankful that we can have such a pleasant home and be able to pay for it. And wait until you have seen some of my children ; wait until the little princess comes. She is such a dainty little thing. If they could only all be like her ! But that would be rather a monotonous school, wouldn't it ? I should want Flora, too. You can remember little Cousin Flora, can't you ?"

"She is a very rude child, I am sure," said Mrs. Tucker, "if she is anything like what she promised to be. I remember when she was four years old she had to be carried out of the room, she was

so violent. Let me see, if I remember rightly she kicked so the nurse could hardly drag her away; all because a bird she had died and her mother was sending it away to be stuffed. She didn't want it stuffed. She acted very strangely, and said it should not be cut open. Then, if I remember rightly, her father said she should bury it, and she didn't like that; and finally her mother did send it off and she told the nurse to take Flora away, and the child kicked dreadfully. I don't envy you having her for a pupil, Daisy."

"I believe I can manage her, mother."

"You try to say so because you must. You try to make me think, too, that you like to have these children come here every day, but it isn't so, Daisy. You are like your poor father; he tried to make me think he wasn't proud, but he was. See, there is a pony-chaise stopping at the gate—and there is a boy's leg in it! I know that is a boy's leg! You didn't tell me, Daisy, you were going to have any boys come; of course I should have objected. Yes, it was a boy's leg; I can see the whole of him now. Just look at him, Daisy Tucker! There he is standing on the wheel; of course it's a boy—do tell him to get off that wheel—I wouldn't see him killed for the world!"

But the teacher did not hear; she was already at the gate to welcome the scholars.

"If they don't behave well, let me know it," said Miss Minerva, looking out of the chaise.

"We shall have no trouble, I am sure." Miss Tucker's smile would have charmed Dick's critical eye if she had not at the same moment offered her hand to steady him as he jumped from the wheel. The princess held out her hand, and the teacher helped her to alight, and they walked to the house.

Miss Minerva gathered up the reins, watching them as they walked. She saw first one happy face then the other turned up laughingly, to look at the new teacher; and the face that looked down at them was very beautiful. She gave the little old sorrel pony a sharp cut with the whip; he threw up his head indignantly and trotted away. "Of course I want them to like her!" said Miss Minerva, as if the innocent old pony had accused her of jealousy.

Miss Tucker's mother gave a little groan as she saw Dick spring up the steps. Her daughter stopped at the parlor door and asked if she would like to see the children before they went in.

"No, not to-day," said Mrs. Tucker; "perhaps I shall feel able to see them to-morrow. I should like to see the little girl—to-morrow."

"Is she sick?" said Dick, who heard the reply.

"She is never very well."

The schoolroom was a large square room with large windows that looked out upon the orchard or garden. "I am so glad it was pleasant this morning," said the princess, looking about.

"Just what I was saying to mother before you came."

"Any boys coming beside me?" asked Dick.

"I believe you are the only one," said the teacher.

"Hard luck!" said the lone gentleman, with a grin. A moment after he was hanging out the window, waving his hat at the three patties. Miss Tucker ran quickly and dragged him in, begging him not to destroy himself the first day of school.

"There's Cora Peterson," he said, coming back, all but his head, in respect to the new teacher; "and there's Flora! there's Flora!" And away he flew, for it was the first time he had seen her since her illness.

Miss Flora certainly received a warm welcome. The princess kissed her many time; Dick shook her hand so hard she begged him not to treat her like a pump. The patties danced merrily around her with real joy in their unaffected little faces, and Cora Peterson declared she was delighted to see her out again.

"Papa said you were going to have ten scholars, Daisy—Miss Tucker, I mean; and here are only seven."

"There are two Jackson girls, and Rose Norman, I believe."

"Kitty and Trot Jackson!" cried Miss Flora. "Well, I do hope, Miss Tucker, you will try to teach Kitty to eat candy without daubing her ears; it is more than she can do now, and she is fourteen years old if she's a day. Trot is a cunning little thing. Rose Norman, did you say? I never heard of her."

"Who ever saw Rose Norman?" asked Dick. No one answered. "Didn't any of you ever see Rose? Then it will be fun to guess how she looks and see who will come the nearest. I guess she's got rose-colored hair and green eyes."

"I guess she's got a crooked nose," said Cora.

"I guess she is tongue-tied and toes in," said Miss Flora.

"I guess she is a fairy and lives in a rose and never sleeps," said the princess.

"I guess she is awful pretty," said Patty.

"So do I," said Polly.

"I guess she don't know geog'phy places," said Dolly.

"There she comes," said Miss Tucker; "she is a stranger, and I hope you will all give her a pleasant welcome."

They looked out and saw a tall lady dressed in deep mourning leading a little girl of perhaps a dozen years, by the hand, much as if she had been only six. The child was also dressed in black.

"How I do hate black!" said Miss Flora, with a little shiver.

"You better guess again all round," said Dick, when Miss Tucker led Rose Norman in.

Was it the black dress, or the cold, unembarrassed manner in which she looked at them, that made the little group turn shyly away from the new-comer? Or might it be the dreadful guesses they had given? Her dark hair hung in stiff regular curls about her face, and her deep blue eyes, although very pretty, Dick could not help wishing she had had instead the green ones he had given her.

Cora Peterson declared to herself that she had a very good nose. How could the princess help smiling if she imagined those stiff curls and that black dress coming out from the heart of a rose!

Miss Flora thought her very pretty, and wondered why she wore that sombre dress.

The teacher introduced Rose, who bowed indifferently, with hardly a move of her eyes towards them. It was a relief when Kitty and Trot Jackson came in.

Kitty shook hands with everybody, whether she knew them or not, while Trot dropped suddenly into one of the smallest chairs in the room, very much as if she had been wound up to run just so long and no longer. Kitty had bushy brown hair that would have fallen and quite hidden her small snub nose, freckles and all, if it had not been for a round comb which she every now and then pushed in with great violence. Her mouth was so very wide Dick thought she ought to be excused if the candy she ate did sometimes touch her ears. But her handsome brown eyes were so full of honesty and good nature that every scholar there was glad she was to be one of them. A half-hour glass hung from her belt,

which she often turned, and, with the help of the sun, and the state of her appetite, forced to serve as a watch, although a less good-natured person could never have been satisfied with the result. "Dolly and Trot will make a fine little team," she said, as the youngest patty seated herself beside Trot; "I was afraid Trotum wouldn't have anybody."

"I was afraid Dolly wouldn't," said Patty.

"So was I," said Polly.

The princess seeing Rose standing apart from the others went to her and said, "Won't you come and talk with us? We must all know each other before the school begins."

"I don't want to know them all," said Rose, not proudly, but so coldly Her Royal Highness felt chilled.

"Don't want to know us all! Why not?"

"I don't think mamma would be willing; she is very particular. She knows Mrs. Hill, and is willing I should know Flora."

"Everybody likes Flora, and the patties are so polite I am sure your mamma would like to have you know them."

"Those three sisters? O no! I heard mamma tell Mr. Hill she was sorry they were coming."

"Perhaps," said Her Royal Highness, smiling, "your mamma wouldn't want you to know me."

"I don't know," said Rose simply. The princess went to Miss Flora and advised her to go see Rose Norman.

"I have wanted to go," said Miss Flora, "but I am afraid somebody is dead."

Before the princess could answer Miss Tucker rang the bell and asked them all to sit down.

Whatever may have been this teacher's method with her little

school, there are many, who, without knowing her scholars, might say some other would have been better. It shall only be said that when the ten scholars went home, after their first day at the new school, each one declared something had been learned which was certainly remarkable. "You have been a very good boy, Dick; please tell Miss Longstreet I said so," said Miss Tucker.

He turned towards her, dropping his books and luncheon-box which he was strapping together, and said — it sounded as if in apology for his good behavior — "Well, you are so awful pretty, Miss Tucker — I wish I could do you in red putty!"

She laughed, and said she would not trouble him to carry a good report of himself, as it might be embarrassing, and she saw his guardian at the gate, and would tell her herself.

"I'll take you home, Rose," said Miss Flora.

Rose was looking out a side window where she could just see the back of the pony-chaise. "Who is that funny-looking woman that drives in that chaise?" she asked.

"Funny-looking!" said Miss Flora indignantly, looking searchingly into Rose's placid face; then more calmly, as if she had discovered how to protect Miss Minerva from further disagreeable adjectives, "Do you know that she has more money than all the rest of the folks in this town?"

"No," said Rose musingly; "is she that little girl's mother?"

"No; she is her great grand-cousin, or something of that kind."

"Then she is nice?" said Rose, still unmoved.

"Nice! You infant, you; can't you tell when folks are nice as soon as you see them?"

"I knew you were," said Rose, with a faint smile.

Miss Flora blushed a little, and rushed and kissed Rose right

on her serene little mouth. All through the school hours she had watched Rose Norman's changeless face. It had been like a magnet to her.

"Mamma wanted me to like you," said Rose.

"You will like Princess Nelson, too," said Miss Flora; "she is splendid; she never gets mad."

"I never do," said Rose.

"Well, you just better believe in the first place that I do," said Miss Flora. "I want you to like the princess, but you must like me best. I shall like you, I know."

"Don't promise too much the first day," said Kitty Jackson, dragging Trot out of the schoolroom.

"Now they have all gone, Rose, will you tell me why you wear black clothes?" Miss Flora's voice was low, and the hand trembled that touched Rose's black dress.

"My father is dead," said Rose.

"Your papa dead!" Miss Flora thought of her own father, and tears filled her eyes.

Rose perhaps would have thanked her for this sympathy if at that moment she had not caught sight of a carriage. "There is your carriage, I am sure," she said; "shall we go?"

"Yes," said Miss Flora, with a little sigh, and they started for the gate.

Miss Minerva was talking with the teacher as they passed.

"I don't know why," said Dick to the princess, "but I would like to pinch that Rose Norman's nose."

"And Kitty Jackson said she would like to pull her nose," said the princess, laughing; "now if you pinch her nose and Kitty pulls it, I am afraid she won't stay at this school very long."

"Hope she won't; she is just making a servant of Flora. Running after water and all that."

"And Flora looks so sick!" sighed Her Royal Highness. "But I want Rose to stay, because she wants a big school."

The teacher did not take her eyes from Miss Minerva, but she lifted the plump little hand of the princess and patted it. Dick grinned, for he knew then that Miss Tucker had heard all they had said.

"Don't think I am coming after you every day; I don't believe in children riding home from school," said Miss Minerva, while the pony-chaise whisked around the corner.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PEACE MESSENGERS.

As time went on Miss Flora's devotion to Rose Norman grew amazingly. She quite neglected Her Royal Highness and Dick, and was often so severe to the three patties that Dick, in spite of his great admiration for her, defended them with cutting rebukes.

One day at recess, while they were sitting under the trees, he said, "Pretty soon, Flora, you won't let the patties speak if Rose Norman is anywhere about."

"They do say such silly things," said Miss Flora, putting her arm about Rose.

"What if they do?" said Dick, stabbing his jack-knife savagely into the turf between his knees. "They can't help it if they ain't so bright as some other folks; and if they never said anything, like some other folks, you'd never know whether they were silly or not."

"I understand very well what you mean," said Miss Flora hotly. She could bear any disagreeable allusion to herself, but the placid Rose she felt bound to protect from anything annoying.

The prudent patties, seeing her face flush, arose to go away and leave the field to the enemy, but Dolly suddenly turned and sat down beside Trot.

"Come, Dolly," said Patty.

"Come right along," said Polly.

"Will you go?" said Dolly to Trot.

"What for?" Trot was comfortably seated with a large piece of cake in her chubby fist.

"Better not go," said Kitty; "sit down and see the fun."

"Yes," said Trot, making room for the little patty beside her; "sit down and see what Flora's going to do."

Miss Flora had no idea of amusing them at that moment. She made a sign for the patties to sit down, and, taking Rose Norman's arm, she drew her away.

"Let her take her little old maid and go sit under the weeping willow," said Kitty.

"It troubles me," said the princess, "to have Flora keep away from us. I wish you hadn't said anything, Dick. The patties are so good they would not have minded what she said."

"Flora used to like us," said Patty.

"I used to like Flora," said Polly.

"I guess I shall slap Rose Norman some day," said Dolly.

Trot gave a delighted chuckle, and handed the warlike patty a part of her cake.

"I don't believe Rose would say anything if you did slap her," said Kitty.

"Something ought to be done about Flora's working so hard for her," said Dick.

"I know it," said the princess seriously; "yesterday I saw her put her rubbers on for her; and you know how it hurts her to hold down her head."

"What a goose!" said Kitty; "but I do like to watch them. Rose takes everything Flora gives her just as if she had bought

and paid for it, and Flora was only the butcher-boy that brought it. The more you say the more she will do it. I say, let her alone."

"Rose is a little old grandmother," said Dick.

"She wants to know how your parlor is furnished before she will come to see you. That's so, Princess, you dear little know-nothing, you don't know anything about mean, stuck-up girls. You needn't roll your eyes at me! This is the first time you ever went to school, and they are all pretty good girls here."

"You know about her father, Kitty," said the princess gently.

"That isn't the reason she won't have any fun," said Cora; "her father died in China, and she hasn't seen him for two years."

"She never could remember anybody two years," said Kitty; "she is too lazy."

"It isn't very hard work to remember your father," said Her Royal Highness.

"I think it's awfully silly to worry about Flora; not that I mind a little fuss, but I say, let Flora take care of herself," said Cora.

"I don't say so," said Dick. "I say if Flora can't take care of herself we must look out for her."

"What can we do?" asked Kitty. "I am ready with any advice, but I don't mean to run after them much."

"The first time she starts to do anything for Rose, just stop her," said Dick.

"No," said the princess; "the first time Rose wants anything and Flora starts to do it, one of us will do it instead."

"I won't wait upon her!" said Cora.

"Trot is about all I want to look after," said Kitty.

"I would do anything for her, and so would Polly, if she didn't treat us so," said Patty.

"How does she treat you?" asked Dick, in a tone that indicated that the one gentleman of this protective committee intended to go quite to the root of the matter.

"She never is cross," said Patty hesitatingly; "but she never says even 'good morning,' to us, and she always acts as if she saw something she must look at over our heads. Don't you think that's so, Polly?"

"Yes, that's so," said Polly.

"The thing is, she never looks as if she saw anything," said Kitty. "I tell you what I would do: every time she wants anything, let's all run and wait upon her. When school is done, Princess run and get her hat, and Cora her sack, and Patty her sun umbrella, Trot her lunch-basket, and the rest can stand round ready to lend a hand if she should drop her pocket-handkerchief."

"And I will spread my jacket on the steps like old What's-his-name did for Queen Elizabeth," said Dick.

"Then Flora would think we were all making fun of her," said Her Royal Highness severely.

"I say, treat Rose so dreadfully she will leave the school," said Cora; "then Flora will come back and we can have a good time. They must come back. When the princess had her party, I remember when I first got there I wouldn't play a game with some of the girls there; but I did finally, and had a good time, and it was as nice a party as I ever saw; I'll say that!"

"'Pon my word, you mixed that up pretty well," said Kitty.

Cora laughed, and said, "I only mean we must associate; if Rose won't associate with us and let Flora, we'll turn her out."

"That's the idea," said Dick.

"I don't want Miss Tucker to lose a scholar," said the princess.
"Suppose we say something to Rose?"

"It wouldn't do at all," said Cora decidedly.

"Let's get up a club," said Dick; "and every one that don't belong we'll haze, like they do at college. Rose won't belong, and we'll haze her. She'll soon leave."

"Recess is more than half over," said Kitty, turning her sand-glass.

"I wish Rose had never come," said Cora.

"What shall we do?" said Her Royal Highness in despair.

"Kitty can say anything and nobody would get provoked," said Dick; "let her go and tell Rose that the whole school is calling her a pig, and a kangaroo, and nobody likes her because she makes a slave of Flora; and everybody is laughing at Flora, and thinks she is acting sillier than a monkey."

"Hadn't I better go tell them they are a whole menagerie?" said Kitty. "I know I don't know much, and Rose is a bigger goose than I, but I wouldn't say that to a saw-dust doll."

"I'll say it," said Trot; "what is it?"

"I think the princess better say it," said Patty; "not call Rose a pig," she hurried to say as they all began to laugh, "but try to get her to—to associate with us. Get Rose, and Flora will come; get Flora, and Rose will."

"I think Royal Highness could do it better than any one," said Dick, "only she feels so awful bad because Flora has cut her so lately, and goes so much with Rose. You know Flora might think she was trying to get her back. I wouldn't have Flora think she would do it for that. I'd rather let them alone."

"No," said Cora; "fight it out now."

"It is just as much fun as anything," said Kitty.

"There is M'randy to ring us in," said Dick, as the very small servant appeared at the door. "After this we better have a good time; they have just spoilt this recess."

"Let the princess speak to Rose, and tell her what we all think," said Cora.

"Let me tell you what I have thought of and see if it would do any good," said Her Royal Highness. "At recess to-morrow let Dolly and Trot go and ask them to please come and have a good time with us; they are so little and cunning I know Flora would have to come."

"There, that's a good plan," said Dick; "and if they put on any airs to those little things we are done with them, that's all!"

The next day they waited anxiously for the recess hour. As soon as they went out Flora started immediately with Rose for the lower end of the garden.

Patty looked after them with a troubled look, and said, "I wish we could put wreaths on Trot and Dolly," for she longed to make the small peacemakers as charming as possible.

"Trot under a wreath would bring tears to anybody's eyes but a Rose Norman," said Kitty.

"Oh! make them look funny," said Dick; "if you can make Flora laugh, you've got her."

"All right," said Kitty; "off with your hat, Trot."

The obedient Trot threw her hat upon the grass, while Patty uncovered Dolly's golden pate and wee pigtail. Two impromptu wreaths were bound upon their heads; a small twig of box, which Dick called an olive branch, was placed in one of Dolly's hands,

and a handkerchief pinned upon a stick for a flag of truce, was given Trot. The small messengers were charged to wave these tokens of good-will thrice before Miss Flora and Rose, and say then (in voices which Her Royal Highness had sweetened with immense gumdrops), "Dear girls! Do come and be friends with us: united we stand, divided we fall!" They wished to say more, but Trot's fat hand went up to her wreath in rather a decided manner, which caused them to condense their message as much as possible, which perhaps was prudent.

"Remember, now," said Kitty, when they started off, "Dolly is to say, 'Dear girls, do come and be friends with us,' and Trot must say, 'United we stand, divided we fall!'"

In spite of the olive branch and blessed white flag, as they marched away there was something in the way Dolly planted her small foot upon the ground that seemed to the peace-loving Patty rather to promise a battle than a treaty.

Miss Flora and Rose were seated together under the willow tree. As the children came near Miss Flora cried, "Do see Dolly and Trot! Look quick, Rose!" then she called for them to come nearer.

"We are coming," said Dolly. There was a military severity about her quite different from Trot, who waddled along good-naturedly, looking over her wreath or under it, as the case might be, for every other minute it slipped down, quite over her little round nose, and hung upon her neck.

When the messengers were quite near, Dolly shook the sprig of box in rather a warlike manner under their noses, and Trot imitated with the flag.

"What is the matter with them?" asked Rose.

"I don't know," said Miss Flora, "but they are too cunning for anything."

"Nothing is the matter with us," said Dolly.

"Why don't you say it?" whispered Trot, beginning to chuckle.

Dolly looked sternly at Trot and waved the box again; after a moment she said abruptly, "Will you come play with us? Nobody likes Rose, she is a pig and a — a" —

"You naughty little girl!" said Miss Flora; "who told you to come and say that?"

"Tain't right," said Trot, laughing.

"They all like you," said the persistent Dolly, "but nobody likes her."

"You go back and tell them if they don't like Rose they need not trouble themselves about me," said Miss Flora. "Go away!" she continued, as the small messengers appeared quite unmoved.

"They want you to come with us, both of you," said Dolly, trying to do her duty in spite of her dislike to Rose, who sat looking at them with curiosity.

Miss Flora gave them an impatient little push which sat Trot down suddenly, but at the same time revived her memory, for she gasped, as she reached after Dolly's dress, looking with one eye over and one under her wreath, "United we fall!"

"You good little thing!" said Miss Flora, picking up the white flag and settling the agitated wreath. "Who told you to come?"

"All of them," said Trot; "and if Dolly hadn't said it wrong they would give us candy and lots of nice things."

"Dolly is very, very naughty," said Miss Flora. Dolly stood with her olive branch upside down.



MESSENGERS OF PEACE.

"Will you go?" said the faithful Trot.

"Yes, come," said Kitty, coming suddenly in sight; "I saw you push Trot over, but I will forgive you if you will come and be decent."

"I didn't mean to push her over," said Miss Flora, "I only wanted her to go away. Yes; I will go and be friends, if Rose will." She turned towards her friend.

"No," said Rose calmly, "I can't go with all of you; mamma is not willing."

By this time all the others were standing near.

"You needn't make a slave of Flora," said Dick.

"A slave? I don't know what you mean." Rose seemed as unmoved as if the said slave were somewhere in Africa.

"Don't you keep her trotting for you all the time, and don't you make her walk like an old grandmother, same as you do?"

"Dick!" said the princess, in a warning voice.

"And don't you eat up Flora's fruit?" said Dolly.

"You are just spoiling Flora, anyway," said Cora.

Rose still sat quite unmoved except a slight flush on her face. Miss Flora arose and stood before her with flashing eyes. "Let me tell you," she declared, "that Rose Norman is my friend; and I will never look or speak to one of you again, if you say another word against her!"

"Flora, we want you both," said Her Royal Highness.

"Don't you talk to me!" cried Miss Flora; "you could have made every one here like Rose, but you chose the patties."

"I chose you first of all," said the princess; "I do like the patties, and all the others, and I want you to come back to us, Flora."

Rose was brushing the crumbs from her lap into her lunch basket. She looked at Miss Flora, then at the princess, but said nothing.

"We have tried to be friends, and they don't want to have anything to do with us," said Cora. "I for one can live without them."

"'Twill be hard," said Kitty, "they are so good-natured and lively; but we must bear it." She was sitting on an old stump of a tree and held Trot's discarded wreath in her hand, through which she looked at Rose with one eye closed, which somewhat injured the sombre expression of the rest of her face.

Cora and Kitty being the oldest in the school, and having expressed themselves so decidedly, Dolly tore the sprig of peaceful box in pieces, and threw it away.

Trot unpinned the flag of truce and returned it to its rightful owner, whereupon the unsuccessful messengers departed in disgust, Trot declaring it wasn't much fun.

When M'randy rang the bell, they all went in with a feeling of disappointment.

For a few days every one tried to appear indifferent to the separation. But it is hard for children to appear what they are not. Many a troubled or scornful glance was sent at recess hours toward the willow-tree where Miss Flora and Rose sat, although mention of them was forbidden.

Trot alone visited both parties without distinction.

She was no spy, for she told as freely what was going on at one spot as the other. One day Dick cut his finger, and when she told Miss Flora that young lady immediately sent her handkerchief, which she told Trot to say he must use, as she had

brought two that day. "Tell her that makes it an even thing," Dick sent back word, "for I forgot to bring any."

Under the circumstances this was considered a very generous action on Miss Flora's part, and Her Royal Highness sent two pears to the aristocratic ladies who dwelt at the upper end of the garden.

Miss Flora sent back some caramels, and Rose a large piece of sponge cake. This last-named article almost wiped out the last taint of bitterness that dwelt in the hearts of the democrats.

For days the chubby messenger went back and forth, carrying no visible flag of truce, but each trip making more and more favorable reports at both ends of the line, until one dull day, when the garden looked a little gloomy, and Trot had made Dolly go with her to help carry the abundance of goodies the democrats had heaped upon her for the aristocrats, there was a shout of joy, that greatly astonished the undemonstrative Rose, as with a messenger on each side of them, the rebels returned, to be friends for all time.

To be sure Patty regretted that Dolly did not have her wreath on, and Cora thought if the other messenger had not been obliged to look through so much chocolate candy, it would have been much more effective; but Her Royal Highness kissed them both, and called them little angels, and said if it had not been for them it never could have happened.

Dick delighted Miss Flora by saying if they had not come back that day he must have deserted and gone over to them.

CHAPTER XX.

SEEKING FOR DIAMONDS.

WHEN the princess went home and told the grandmother and Miss Minerva that the "whole school" was once more on friendly terms, she felt so happy that she even went so far as to say, "I really begin to like Rose Norman."

"Well, I don't," said Dick. "I don't see one thing about her to like. She's mean, and she's lazy, and she feels too big."

"I want to like her," said the princess, "because Flora does; and I have found one good thing about her: she tells the truth."

"I wish you would learn, Dick, that there is something good in everybody," said Miss Minerva. "I was quite old before I ever thought of it."

"I don't believe it," said Dick positively.

"I do," said the princess; "but I should like to know where it is in Miss Tucker's mother."

"Did you ever see such a mean woman?" said Dick. "Rose Norman ought to be her child. I wish that was so and they would both travel among the Indians and get taken captives out on the plains. I would like to see a big Indian with a tomahawk just marching them along on foot, for two hundred miles."

"Why, Dick!" exclaimed the princess, "Mrs. Tucker can't walk from one end of the garden to the other."

"She could with a big Indian behind her, I guess. Oh! there ain't much to like about her."

"Ain't there?" said Miss Minerva.

"Well, I ain't said 'ain't' for a long time, Miss Minerva; ask Royal Highness now, but it's good enough for Mrs. Tucker."

"I remember once," said Miss Minerva, "when I was boarding in a small hotel in the country, we all found the landlady very disagreeable; nobody seemed able to find anything to like in her. There was a little old German woman who came once a week to clean; she was always good-natured herself, and forever making excuses for others who were not. 'I vinds de goot sdides of beoples,' she used to say to the boarders. One day after the landlady had been unusually cross and disagreeable I met Kathrine in the yard with her pail and scrub brush. She had received a good scolding, and her cross mistress was just leaving her. 'Kathrine,' I said, 'you must find it. You believe there is a diamond in every field; see if you can find one there.' She was a long time trying to understand what I meant; after a while she laughed, and shaking her hand at the landlady's window, she said, 'It vas hard to deeg there, Miss Longstreet, but I vinds you von diamond to-day.' I had forgotten all about it when late in the afternoon she knocked at my door. 'I vinds it!' she exclaimed, as soon as I opened the door, 'a little von, a diamond; she vill not hurt a schipder!' You see the landlady was very much interested in the study of spiders, and had a few fine specimens in her room; that day Kathrine had found one, and was going to kill it when the landlady interfered, and saved its life."

"I would rather hunt for diamonds in Kathrine than in that landlady," said the princess.

"Of course you would rather go where it's good pickings," said Miss Minerva. "I wish you could learn to look everywhere for them."

"Let's call it 'hunting diamonds,' and see if we can find out what Rose Norman is good for, and Mrs. Tucker, too, will you, Royal Highness?" said Dick.

"I would like to join you also," said Miss Minerva; "wouldn't you, Henrietta?"

The grandmother smiled, and said, certainly, if they didn't consider her too old.

"Do you like diamonds?" asked Miss Minerva.

The grandmother mildly affirmed that she did like them.

"Then you are not too old to hunt them," said Miss Minerva.

"Let's call ourselves 'The Diamond Hunters' — no, the 'Diamond Seekers'; that sounds splendidly: 'The Diamond Seekers.' We must wear badges, too," said Dick, who was fond of organizing.

"I should laugh to see Grandma with a badge on," said the princess.

"Not if we had pretty ones; the kind Miss Minerva would buy — silver ones, with D. S. marked on them."

Miss Minerva took the hint, and a few days after when the princess came in from school the grandmother had a small silver diamond in place of the old-fashioned brooch she had worn so long; and Her Royal Highness soon discovered the two initials D. S. engraved upon it.

"Well," said Dick, as he pinned one like it over his heart, "I have dug pretty deep, pretty deep into Mrs. Tucker, and I tell you, Diamond Seekers, she's meaner than I thought she was."

"She's awfully selfish," said the princess sadly, polishing her new badge with her pocket handkerchief.

"I propose," said her father, who was beginning to get interested, "that no failures be mentioned. If you strike what you take to be a barren field, don't mention it to the others; but every time you find one good thing where you thought there was nothing, then tell of it."

"I want to ask Flora to join," said the princess, "but she would want Rose, and I don't believe Rose would know what we were doing, or what Diamond Seekers meant."

"I'm working on her now," said Dick pompously.

"I begin to like her," said the princess; "she told me ever so much about China to-day; you know we have China to-morrow."

"I will give a badge to every one who will join, and promise to really work," said Miss Minerva.

Miss Flora came the next day, and became a member with a very slight investigation.

A few days after Kitty Jackson said she wanted to be a "Dizzy Sinner," too; but when Her Royal Highness solemnly explained, she said she thought she and Trot better wait until cool weather.

The modest patties feared they did not know enough. Cora Peterson said she would like the badge, but not the work. Rose Norman said if Flora had joined she thought her mamma would let her.

On the whole, the princess and Dick felt a little discouraged. The others did not seem to think so much of the idea as they, and they wished the Diamond Seekers had been confined to home folks. But nothing is better for discontent than work, and they meant to be faithful to the badges Miss Minerva had given them.

Day by day they found new stones where they least expected them; but Mrs. Tucker's case still appeared a hopeless one. If they looked into the parlor and said good morning, on their way to the schoolroom, she said, "Don't make a noise!" If they came back after school, for a forgotten book or ball, she looked greatly annoyed, and complained to her daughter.

"O, dear, dear!" thought the princess, one day, as she was walking from school with Dick and the three patties, "I must give Mrs. Tucker up!" and she could not help telling how discouraged she felt.

The patties each wore a badge now, although they had not as yet reported any remarkable discoveries.

"I wish she would treat M'randy better," said Patty.

"I didn't want to say so," said Dick, "but I have given Mrs. Tucker up."

"We won't do that," said Her Royal Highness; "but we can wait a little while—not try to find anything now."

"But she grows worse and worse," said Dick.

"It can't be any harder than it is now," said the princess.

The patties left them, and Mrs. Tucker's case was soon forgotten. They found Joe, the new man, at work tying up a vine at the gate. They stopped to watch him, and he saw their silver diamonds sparkle in the sun. He asked what they were, and they were delighted to explain, although they took great care to report only successful cases.

"Why don't you set to digging on me?" said Joe; "I'm orful bad; lots of work for you."

"Don't you love anybody?" asked Her Royal Highness, feeling very sure that Joe was not quite so bad as he pretended.

"No," said Joe; "ain't got anybody to love."

"Oh! there are lots of people in the world, Joe."

"They're nothing to me," said Joe.

"Don't you like anybody?" she said.

"No," said Joe, with a savage gesture; "if I had any little boys or girls I would take them to a cannibal island, and fatten them and eat them; that's the way I like little girls and boys."

This was to Dick the most interesting field to labor in he had yet found; and Her Royal Highness was smiling at Joe as sweetly as if she had found him well studded with precious stones. "You never had any children, did you?" she asked.

"Yes, O, yes!" said Joe; "but I have eaten them all."

"I suppose you are very sorry for it now," said Dick, without a smile.

"No; they were very good," said Joe, with a glance at Dick's round cheek.

"Do you suppose that is what makes you have that bad cough?" said the princess.

"My cough is a good cough," said Joe; "I should oversleep every morning if I didn't have that cough."

"I've found your diamond," cried Dick; "you're jolly!"

"Yes," said Joe, "I think I ought to have a little credit, as bad a cough as I've got, and all my children gone, and yet see you two nice plump little pigeons pass me every day, and not offer to eat you." He looked up with a smile that was not wholly merry, and gathering up his tools, went inside the gate.

They followed, and wished he would say more; but he stood examining his work from the inside of the gate, in silence, and they walked on to the house.

They thought of Joe's pale face and blue lips, and to them his cheerfulness was a jewel of no mean order.

"I like Joe a great deal better than I did John, don't you, Royal Highness?" asked Dick.

"Yes," she said, "I do; but now maybe we could find something good in John."

"Perhaps," said Dick doubtfully.

Before they reached the door they heard some one call, and looking back, Miss Flora was seen coming breathlessly up the avenue.

"On my way home from school," she gasped, "guess who I saw but Nané—that horrid Nané! At first I wouldn't look at her, then I saw her looking at my badge, and that just made me remember what I had promised, and I said, How do you do? and she said, How do you do? and we both kind of smiled, and she said she had had bad news from France since she left us; that her mother was dead, and her little sister was left all alone. Would you believe it?—she had tears in her eyes! That wasn't all. I asked her to come in the house and see Tristesse, and she said she had just been there. When I went in I told Tristesse, and she said Nané had sent every cent she had in the world to take care of her little sister. Would you believe it now, that horrid, wicked Nané?" Miss Flora was obliged to sit down upon the steps to recover her breath.

"I guess you never thought you'd find a diamond there, did you? Pretty soon we shall make out that there isn't a wicked person anywhere. I think we count too small things," said Dick.

"There must be one in Mrs. Tucker," Her Royal Highness said, in such a solemn, prophetic voice that Miss Flora and Dick

laughed so heartily it brought the grandmother and Miss Minerva to the door.

Miss Flora was delighted to see they each wore the sign of the Diamond Seekers. "I don't wonder," she said, "the princess is good, you two are so good and kind, and don't feel too proud to play with children."

"The diamonds are just sticking out all over them," said the princess.

While this conversation was going on at the Nelsons' house, Kitty and Trot were standing with Rose Norman before her door. When Rose walked home — which was often now, as Miss Flora seldom rode, unless she was sick — Rose was obliged to walk with Kitty, or alone, as Kitty and Trot were the only scholars who went her way.

"How many valuable stones have you picked up to-day?" said Kitty, looking at Rose's little diamond which she wore in a ribbon about her throat.

"I don't quite understand it," said Rose simply.

"No, I don't believe you do," said Kitty. "I understood it, and so I didn't get one."

"Princess wanted you to have one," said Rose.

"Too hard work; I couldn't promise to do it," said Kitty.

"Dick said I must find something good in everybody I saw," explained Rose; "and I don't see anything very bad in anybody, do you?"

"Well, now, I call that getting on first-rate. You've got so you can stand the patties pretty well, and can you see that Trot is pretty when she has a dirty face?"

"I never said I didn't like the patties," said Rose calmly.

"Mamma said they couldn't be very nice, or they wouldn't live on Blacksmith's Corner, so I didn't go with them; but I never said so to them. I think they are very good now, and I told mamma so."

"Did you see they were nice before you got your badge?"

"Yes; but you see I had to say good-morning to them, and talk to them when we all belonged to the Diamond Seekers. I found out they were very polite, and I said I was sorry I had not said good-morning before."

"Did you say that, Rose Norman?"

"Yes," said Rose, still unmoved.

"Perhaps you think now I am good enough for you to go with, and Trot is an angel."

"I think you are a very funny girl, but I never said I didn't like you," said Rose, with a faint smile.

"I don't think you was very perlite," said Trot, when Kitty said good-by, and turned hastily away.

"I wasn't, Trot," said Kitty, pulling her along; "as true as you're alive, I wasn't."

Rose watched them as they went, and thought with a little surprise that they were going the wrong way. Perhaps she would have been a little more surprised if she had followed them to the house of Her Royal Highness, and heard Kitty say to Dick who met her at the gate, "I have found a diamond, Dick, and I want a badge, a real shiny one! Rose Norman isn't a pig; and as true as my name is Katherine Jackson, Trot says she is twice as 'perlite' as I am; so give her a badge, too. It isn't as hard work as I thought, and we want to join before cold weather."

Miss Minerva came out and pinned a diamond on each, and Kitty said, "Once, Trot Jackson, you were a Dizzy Sinner; now

you are a Diamond Seeker. To think that I should live to see you belonging to a society. You must find a jewel somewhere in your Aunt Tab now."

"What!" said Trot, who was nearly dislocating her neck to see how the diamond looked under her fat chin.

"You must find something good in your cross great-aunt the next time you visit her," said Kitty.

"When I had the croup she put goose oil on my neck," said Trot stoutly.

"Good," said Miss Minerva; "Trot understands it."

Trot laughed, and Kitty whisked her away.

That night Dick dreamed that Mrs. Tucker put goose oil on Joe's neck at the gate, and Her Royal Highness dreamed that her grandfather joined the society, and the patties pinned the badge in his stiff white hair.

CHAPTER XXI.

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS' ORCHESTRA.

"I WANT to tell you something," said Miss Flora, one morning as she met the princess at Miss Tucker's gate. "Papa was here last night, and he says Miss Tucker can play the violin like—like all possessed; I knew you would want to know it. I told papa I thought you could play now pretty well, and he said I never heard any one play as well as Miss Tucker."

"Oh! I wish I could hear her."

"You can; she is going home with me after school, and I shall make her bring her violin; you just come over—happen over, you know."

"Flora, do you suppose"—Her Royal Highness stopped suddenly.

"Yes, I do," said Miss Flora.

"Do you know what I mean, Flora?"

"You mean, will she come into our orchestra?"

"Would you dare ask her?"

"Yes, I would."

"But we shall make such a dreadful noise, Flora, and she can play so well."

"That's the reason we want her, goosey. I want to tell you something; the patties must join. They can play on combs so it sounds beautiful!"

"On combs?"

"Yes, combs; they play different parts."

"And Polly can whistle better than any bird you ever heard," said the princess.

"Polly!" exclaimed Miss Flora.

"Yes, Polly," cried Dick, poking his head in between them. "You are the loudest whisperers I ever heard; I know every word you said."

"Did you hear about the patties?" said the princess.

"Yes; play on combs; won't have 'em."

"Sounds better than your flute," said Miss Flora frankly.

"You haven't heard me since Joe was my teacher, Miss."

"Well, you never heard the patties at all."

Dick made no reply, but turned toward Kitty and Trot, who were just coming in. "Can you play on anything, Kitty? We are getting up an orchestra."

"How do you like a ninety-nine-cent trombone?" asked Kitty. "I can play, 'Home, Sweet Home,' 'Sister thou wast mild and lovely,' 'Bounding Billows,' and 'Almost Persuaded.' Don't laugh; I tell you it's beautiful. But you can't depend on my always having the trombone, for Aunt Tabby sent me a dollar to buy me a work-box, and I went to the ninety-nine-cent store, and they were out of work-boxes, so I had to take the trombone; if Aunt Tabby knew it she might take it away; but I had a work-box, and a work-basket, and I never owned a trombone."

"A trombone!" said Dick, "that sounds something like."

"Wait till you hear it," said Kitty confidently.

"We'll have a German Band," said Dick. "Royal Highness' father is going to fix up a room in the carriage house, and any one

that belongs can go there any time to practice. He is going to have lamps, and music stands, and a piano; and when we can play well enough, we shall give a concert."

"I'll promise to bring tears to somebody's eyes if you'll give me a solo," said Kitty.

Perhaps it was this promise that hurried matters; for in less than a week after it was given, the first rehearsal was appointed.

Everybody was delighted with the Music Hall, as Dick insisted on calling the large room Jack had arranged for the weekly rehearsals. On the painted walls hung pictures of musicians and composers; many of these were wood cuts which the princess and Dick had cut from papers and magazines from time to time; there were also a few fine engravings and photographs, which Miss Minerva, although unable, from lack of musical ability, to become a member, freely offered as her contribution.

Perhaps what interested them more than the pictures was a large bulletin pinned upon the wall, which read:

FIRST VIOLINS	{	Hon. Miss Tucker
		Hon. Mr. Jack Nelson
TROMBONE		Miss Kitty Jackson
SECOND VIOLIN.		Miss Royal Highness Nelson
PIANO		Miss Flora Hill
COMBS		Misses Patties
FLUTE		Mr. Dick Longstreet
CHARGE OF MUSIC		Miss Rose Norman
MESSENGER		Miss Trot Jackson

CRITICS:

Miss Minerva Longstreet, Miss Cora Peterson.

Miss Minerva said it was a very politic arrangement to name for critics the ones who possessed the least ear for music.

It was no surprise to see Miss Tucker's name, for every one knew she had promised to join; but even Jack, who played fairly well, was delighted at her condescension.

"Feel my poor little ninety-nine-center tremble," said Kitty, when they began to take out the fine violins, and Dick came to show her his flute.

The patties stood with pretty new combs in their hands, while Polly looked as if she wished the floor would open and tumble her out of sight.

"Come, let us begin," said Jack, rapping his bow upon a music stand; "I sent you each a book, and hope you have looked over your part on the page I marked."

The three patties smiled, for it was their well-worn *Marseillaise*.

They all played very slowly at first, each watching the other, and Kitty made one mistake which would have frightened one of the patties terribly, had one of them been guilty of it; but Kitty laughed, and begged to be excused on the ground that the notes were blacker than she had ever seen them before.

"Not bad music," said Jack, which was the truth, for he had listened only to Miss Tucker's well-trained bow; "the same again."

This time, above flute, violin and piano, came a shrill, martial whistle, like a very fife upon the field. It could not come from Jack, Miss Minerva thought; he could not whistle like that; Miss Flora was counting very hard, and Kitty pulled away at the trombone; the princess, with excited eyes, was scraping away as if there must be French blood in her veins, that was stirred as it had never been before. Dick could not play the flute and whistle, too. It seemed quite out of place to accuse Miss Tucker. Polly

stood with her back to the critics. How sedate her little braid looked.

"O, Miss Minerva! why can't we play something?" said Cora when they had stopped.

"So we will," said the other critic, applauding with all her strength.

"Now play this scale," said Jack, who did not try to hide his pleasure that they had done so well.

It was a dismal failure.

"It would take at least a dollar trombone to play that thing," said Kitty.

"And not a very pretty tune when you get it," said Miss Minerva, which made them all laugh, and brought up their spirits and strength to try it again.

"It was Dick's fault, then," said Miss Flora.

"I know it," said Dick, not very good-naturedly. "It's awful hard for me; Royal Highness has two violins with her."

"Not when she plays second," said Miss Flora.

"I play first all the time, Flora," said the princess; "it is so easy to follow after Miss Tucker and papa."

"After this I'll play second violin; I think it is harder myself," said her father.

"If you would let Joe in, you would have a flute what is a flute," said Dick.

"Why not have him?" inquired Miss Tucker.

"No!" said Miss Minerva.

"We don't know much about him," said Jack; "he hasn't been here long. I feel the responsibility of the children; and the fact is, Miss Tucker, I fear he is dissipated."

Miss Tucker drew her bow softly across her violin, and bent her fair face until her cheek touched it also, as if she had questioned it, and the soft tones were the answer. "Perhaps I am wrong," she said, turning to Miss Minerva, "but I try to teach my children that no matter how unfortunate they find people, they will generally be able to find some common ground where it is safe for all to stand. Here we are, all comfortable and happy, and very soon will make very good music, and yet with all these advantages we really need Joe's flute; if that is so, he probably needs us much more. I do not mean to dictate, Miss Minerva, but just now music seems such a safe, common ground to meet upon, that I ask you to let Joe join, and I will promise to be responsible for him."

"Our first violin," said Jack, without waiting for Miss Minerva to reply, "has proposed that Joe be invited to join us as first flute player. Those in favor will please say Aye."

"Aye, aye," came from each musician, but the loudest of all from the solitary little flute player.

It was not considered necessary to ask for contrary minds.

"You couldn't find another ninety-nine-center, could you?" said the trombone player pathetically.

"Not an experienced one," said Jack.

"Then I will struggle alone," said the heroic Kitty.

The time flew so quickly that when an hour and a half had passed they all wanted to play a little longer, but Miss Minerva said no; this was too good a thing to get sick of, and they must not overdo the first time.

The instruments were all put up excepting Miss Tucker's violin, which Jack said must be heard alone to encourage the others.

She played a little solo which was very beautiful, and as she was a part of the little orchestra you will pardon them all for feeling very proud and happy. Then she played a simple air, and Miss Flora accompanied her on the piano. They were still more proud and happy. Two members! Miss Tucker then beckoned to Polly, who almost squirmed out of her clothes as they all looked in wonder; and when Miss Tucker went after her, she was running after her hat as fast as she could go. But the teacher brought her back, and, standing between her and the lenient critics, whispered to Miss Flora, who looked pleased, and began to play something they had never heard. After a few measures Miss Tucker's violin was heard, and soon little Polly softly whistled another part. Could it be the same who had imitated the shrill fife in the *Marseillaise*? It was as soft now as the sweetest flute. The violin grew sad and wailed mournfully; suddenly the whistle grew melancholy. Then the violin went capering off in a reckless melody, and nothing could exceed the rollicking manner in which the whistler joined; and all this time Polly stood behind Miss Tucker, and those who saw the most of her were obliged to be satisfied with her small back and pigtail.

"We could give a concert to-morrow," exclaimed Dick, after they had nearly deafened one another applauding the three members.

"When did you learn all that, Polly?" said the princess.

"Polly and I often practice together," said Miss Tucker. "I told you we could soon surprise them, little girl."

"Did you ever see anybody so good as Miss Tucker?" said the princess to Kitty.

"No, I never did, I never did," answered Kitty; "and it is so jolly to see any one as good as she is and so pretty. So handsome,



MISS TUCKER'S SOLO.

so beautiful! As a general thing, Your Royal Highness, very good people are apt to be dreadfully homely. If I had been at all pretty I feel sure I should have been good; but I would not have people saying, ‘Isn’t she homely, though? Yes; but she is real good’!”

The princess looked into the trombone player’s merry eyes and said, “I am sure, Kitty, nobody ever thought you were homely; how could they?”

Kitty whispered something into her trombone, and they went to join the others, who were still admiring Polly.

It was quite a new thing for one of the patties to be admired out of their own little home; and Patty and Dolly were so happy they were in a hurry to get away from public eyes and talk over Polly’s success by themselves; or, as Dolly expressed it, “Run home an’ tell ma our Polly beat everybody.” On this account, they were the first to go.

Dick felt that he must work pretty hard to keep his place, and the princess said when she thought of Miss Tucker’s playing she thought they were pretty good to let her play at all. Then Miss Minerva at once proposed that the princess take regular lessons of Miss Tucker. “Would Miss Tucker take her for a pupil?”

“I have taken her already,” said the teacher. “I agreed to teach her all I could; after this, Your Royal Highness, do not forget your violin lessons.”

“Proud thing!” said Miss Flora to herself; “that’s only so Princess won’t pay extra for her lessons; and the Nelsons are so rich, and Daisy Tucker is so poor. I’ll fix that for her!”

When the princess told her grandfather that Joe was going to join the orchestra he looked very angry, and the grandmother

said sadly, "I have been talking to your grandfather; he used to play the bass fiddle in church, and I wanted him to get the old fiddle out and join, but now I don't believe he will."

The old gentleman left the room with great dignity, and Her Royal Highness sighed, and said it was very hard to tell what was right to do.

"That is very true," said Miss Minerva; "but let us try to do the best, always, as far as we can see."

"I told Miss Tucker, Cousin Minerva, that I felt sure you didn't want Joe to join, and she said, 'Well, Princess, I am only doing as I promised; you yourself made me a Diamond Seeker, and I found that Joe could play the flute better than any of us.'"

"You do not mean to have me believe, do you," said Miss Minerva suddenly, as if she had not heard a word Her Royal Highness had said, "that a woman with such good sense as Miss Tucker, has no better name than Daisy?"

"Her right name is Olive," said the princess; "but her papa called her Daisy always, and he is dead, and she likes the name. Why don't you call me Henrietta Minerva?"

"I think it is about time, Your Royal Highness."

"No, no!" said the grandmother; "she shall always be Princess as long as I live."

"Don't be alarmed," said Miss Minerva, "don't be alarmed," with an odd laugh; "we are too old to quarrel now about the child's name."

Dick had hastened to tell Joe that he had been voted in. The pleasant news was received more quietly than Dick had supposed possible. He showed Joe the book they used, and was more than satisfied when Joe played the simple airs with the greatest ease.

"Why don't you play the flute for a living, instead of working in a garden?" he exclaimed.

"I used to play in the theater in New York," said Joe, "but my cough had stood by me, as no friend ever did, and when the doctor said it wanted the country air, I thought I better humor it," with a little laugh.

"It's better, don't you think so, Joe?" said Dick hopefully, and coming a trifle nearer.

"I don't think it will ever desert me."

"You don't mean you will always have it, do you, Joe?" only half comprehending his strange tone and manner.

Joe examined his flute carefully, as if the answer to Dick's anxious question lay somewhere in its tuneful wood; then placing his lank hot hand on Dick's shoulder, he said, "It is a good thing to be sure of any thing, my boy; that's one thing I am sure of." Joe's tone was careless, but his lips trembled.

"Joe," whispered Dick, looking around to be sure they were quite alone, "I used to be poor, and my Granny was poor, and when she was sick she told me to always be sure that God would never leave me; he never left her, and if I was ever poor, or sick, I must remember God never leaves anybody alone."

"He has left me alone," said Joe huskily.

"No, He hasn't," said Dick; "I thought I was alone when Granny died, and now I am happy."

"Well, go away, go away!" said Joe, pushing the little fellow gently aside.

"You know you've got me, Joe," said Dick, coming nearer again; "I will stand by you."

Joe wiped his lips and took up his flute. "Fourteenth page

looks easy," he said; "you try the top line, and I'll take the other part."

"How easy it is to play with you!" said the boy, when he placed his flute in the box.

"Do you think so?" Joe spoke with a pleased smile. "Come often, if they'll let you."

"And you will come to the next rehearsal? They want you, every one of them. And, Joe—I do believe what Granny said—if you cough bad to-night, don't you think you are alone?"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CONCERT.

THE rehearsals that followed the first were conscientious and hard-working affairs; beside, there was much practicing done at home, by each member.

Joe proved to be a great assistance. Dick's flute seemed to feel the advantage of a companion, and together the two glided over difficult passages where before Dick's had stumbled badly, and once or twice completely lost its way. Joe seldom spoke unless it was to give Dick a hint. They all worked hard. Even the merry Kitty looked as if she intended to make trombone playing her life's work. Her Royal Highness had begun to take regular lessons of Miss Tucker, and threatened to soon play better than her father. Every week the little orchestra improved.

"We can play pretty well by Christmas, can't we, papa?" said the princess.

"I hope so," said her father, "for I want to celebrate your grandmother's birthday as it was never celebrated before."

The grandmother's birthday came on Christmas eve.

"Won't it be fine, papa! You know the little bridge where the willows are? Dick is going to make a picture of it for Grandma, because that is where she first saw Grandpa; and Cousin Minerva is going to buy a frame — a great big one — and I am saving my

money to buy a lace cap, an awful costly one — real, best lace — and everything will be grand. Then if we could have a concert in the evening ! ”

“ I think we can, Your Royal Highness, if Dick will keep up with the rest.”

“ Don’t you think he improves ? ”

“ He is very capable, and very lazy.”

“ Joe plays splendidly, papa.”

“ Yes ; but we must not depend on poor Joe. By Christmas perhaps ” —

“ O, papa ! he is better, he says, than when he first came.”

“ I hope so. I told him not to do any more hard work. But I am afraid he is not strong enough to play as long at a time as he does.”

She thought this must be a mistake, for Joe played better and better every time they met. No matter how many times they repeated anything, he was always ready to try it once more. It was true sometimes he coughed so badly he had to go away, and once he did not come back ; but he said himself his cough was better.

One day the princess took her grandfather aside and said, “ We are practicing now for Grandma’s birthday, and if we had a big fiddle, we could give the best concert you ever heard.” The old gentleman shook his head, and she knew he was thinking of playing with Joe.

Her Royal Highness was sorely puzzled ; if it had seemed a difficult thing to bring Rose to associate with the other children of the school, how much more of an undertaking to bring this stiff-necked old gentleman to sit down and scrape a big fiddle by the

side of his hired man, in the old carriage house. Yes, the old carriage house! for as she sat herself upon his knee, and looked at his spotless linen and fine broadcloth, his gold spectacles and stiff white hair, she forgot the pretty concert room. She could not recall the merry faces she had seen there; even the melody was no longer in her ears; she alone saw Joe, just as he was, in his flannel shirt, and worn coat, and in his hand a rake, or gardener's shears; and she was asking her proud grandfather to take a seat beside him in the old carriage house, with his big, big fiddle. How insignificant Joe's flute became!

She ran away, shaking her finger at the grandfather, which meant she would conquer him in time. But when she confided all to Miss Tucker, there was little triumph in her face or voice. "How can we get him in?" she said; "how can we ever do it?"

"Do you know where his old viol is?" said Miss Tucker.

"Grandma does."

"Get it all strung up and fixed without his knowing it; then ask him some evening to play with you and your father."

"If he saw it all right there, he would have to play, wouldn't he?"

"I don't see how he could help it."

"But he will never play in the orchestra, I'm afraid," said the princess, becoming depressed again.

"Patience, Your Royal Highness. How many times do you suppose little Trot traveled across the garden before she brought Flora and Rose back?"

"Why, who told you about that?"

"Don't you suppose I know what is going on in my own garden?"

"And do you think this will turn out as well as that, Miss Tucker?"

"I hope so. Why should it not?"

"Grandpa and Joe!" said the princess, laughing; suddenly she looked very sober. "Poor Joe! do you think he is worse? Do you think it hurts him to play?"

"No; I am sure it does him good, for he told me so."

The princess looked surprised. Did everybody make a confidant of the beautiful schoolmistress?

That very evening as Jack and the princess began their evening practice, Jack said, "There is your instrument in the corner, father; we should be very glad if you would join us."

The grandfather put on his spectacles, and looked the old fiddle over carefully. "Where did these strings come from?" he said, beginning to tune it.

"I put them on. Are they all right?" said Jack.

"Appear to be," said the old gentleman condescendingly, drawing his bow across. "Where is your mother?"

The princess ran for the grandmother, who came in great haste, that she might not lose one note of the pompous big fiddle.

The grandfather's fingers had grown a little stiff, and it was so long since the bow had known active service that it wabbled now and then in the wrong direction, a little out of time, and so much out of tune that it would have sorely vexed poor Joe's correct ear could he have heard it. But the people who did hear it seemed delighted. The grandmother declared she must get a silk duster for the great fiddle. Jack said, "Bravo, father! That wasn't bad after a rest of twenty, thirty — how many years is it?"

The princess looked overjoyed, and whispered something in the

grandfather's ear; he bowed, and said, "Well, well, little maid, I cannot promise that."

Miss Minerva said she did not see but he played as well as he ever did; which perhaps was the truth.

Dick said nothing, but he really did not belong to the family, and they had not asked him to join with his flute. Still he was very proud, of course, to be present. And that humble person called Joe was at that very moment getting some very respectable music from his insignificant flute, and heard nothing else; while the black shining eyes of a little brown mouse peering out from under the bed proved that even Joe was not wholly without an audience.

For many evenings the grandfather continued to play with Jack and the princess, and one night, greatly to the delight of all, he asked why Dick did not join them.

"O, papa! will you ask Grandpa to please play at the birthday concert?" cried the princess, believing now was the moment to come out boldly.

"I cannot ask him unless he comes to the rehearsals."

"Why, papa! Grandpa, you know."

"In Your Royal Highness' orchestra, the best man is the best player."



GRANDFATHER CONDESCENDS TO PLAY.

"He will not come, I am afraid, while Joe plays," she said mournfully. But at the next rehearsal for the concert, just as they were all hard at work on "Joe Anderson my Jo," the grandfather walked in with his big fiddle, and asked Her Royal Highness where she wanted him.

"Where would you like to sit?" she said, ready to hug him before them all, for his great condescension.

"He must sit on this side," said Miss Flora.

He was seated near the piano, and he must have been surprised to see how suddenly he was transformed from a haughty old gentleman into one of Her Royal Highness' humble musicians. When he played out of tune, Miss Flora would drum the right note very hard on the piano, and say, "That's your note, Bass Viol." He would have been offended, but nobody noticed it, and Miss Flora looked so well pleased when he played it right that he soon forgot everything but the music.

JOE AND HIS FLUTE.

Those were busy days for the princess, and Dick did not spend many idle hours. He had worked some time on the bridge and willows, and one afternoon he brought it in disgust to Her Royal Highness. "Now tell me the truth," he said, in his eager way.

She held it from her, and looked at it for a long time. "I am afraid, Dick, Grandpa is too big for the bridge."

"No," said he, with a weary sigh; "the bridge is too small for your grandfather. I won't change him; I'll make the bridge bigger."

"No; I wouldn't do that; you might spoil it. Can't you make the bridge a little blacker—I mean, to look stronger?"

"Do you think now it looks as if it would break down if he went on it?" he asked seriously.

"Yes, I do," she said truthfully.

"I'll ask Joe; he knows a good deal." But when Joe told him to let it alone and begin another, starting right, Dick was thoroughly angry. Still Joe seemed to know what he was talking about, and although Dick regretted the long hours spent on the big man and the feeble bridge, he went for more paper, and began another, which was so much better than the first that the princess really accused Joe of doing a part of it; but Joe shook his head, and Dick said he had not touched it; only advised him a little.

"Advise him some more," said she.

After much hard work the picture was finished. The grandfather and the bridge appeared to be safely proportioned, and the willows almost waved, the princess said. Miss Minerva declared the water looked quite wet, which was more than could be said of many real marine views done by older artists than Dick. She was so well pleased she went to town immediately for the frame.

As the day drew near, nothing could exceed the princess' anxiety for fear something would happen to her orchestra. "If the concert is all right, I won't care for anything else," she said; "but we have kept Grandma away from all these rehearsals, so that she should hear us when we knew our parts, and now, if we don't play splendidly, what shall I do?"

"No one will fail you unless it is Joe," said her father.

"I am not afraid Joe will fail me, papa; if he does, Dick can play alone now. But Joe is better, he says so every day."

Still on the morning of the birthday she sent Dick very early to inquire after Joe's health, and beg him to stay in-doors all day, that he might not cough in the evening. Joe sent back word that he never felt better, and promised to play in the evening as he had never played before.

"I knew it," she exclaimed; "but papa will make me think he is very sick."

"Do you think Joe is a pretty good man?" said Dick.

"Of course I do!"

"He is kind, and — and — don't you think so?"

"What do you mean?" as she saw tears start to his eyes.

"I only wanted to know if you thought he was a good kind of a man."

"You don't think he is awful sick, do you?" she said, trying to understand his emotions.

"No; not so very," said Dick, and the princess turned, with her mind wholly on the evening.

"A grandmother's birthday ought not to be forgotten," she said, as she looked over the gifts that lay upon the bed in Miss Minerva's room. Simple gifts, most of them; some made by members of the orchestra, who already loved the gentle grandmother, and felt greatly honored that they were allowed to play before her on her birthday.

"Say old ladies' birthdays," said Miss Minerva, "because there are so many really estimable old ladies who, in all probability, Your Royal Highness, will never be grandmothers; and they ought to have their birthdays remembered."

"Not so much as the grandmother," said the princess.

"Nonsense!" said Miss Minerva, picking off a bit of lint that

had blown on a fat, shapeless little tomato pincushion, upon which there seemed not the least necessity of pinning the two words, "From Trot."

"When you are old you shall have a birthday party whether you are a grandmother or not," said the princess.

"I want a fat little pincushion, and a lace cap, and a picture, and white mittens, and tatting, and tidies, and wool slippers, and lots of things that people make for you," said Miss Minerva, drawing the idea of her needs from the bed before her.

"Why, Cousin," said the princess, laughing, "you wouldn't want that picture! You never met anybody on that bridge for the first time, and then afterward said you would marry him, like Grandma."

"No," said Miss Minerva, "I never did; but I did meet a man once down at the big gate, and told him I never would marry him while the world stood. Why can't I have a picture of that gate?"

Would not the princess' eyes have opened wondrously wide if Miss Minerva had told her that this same man afterwards walked pompously across the little bridge by the willows to meet Her Royal Highness' grandmother?

The princess laughed merrily. But she determined that Miss Minerva should yet have a fine picture of "that gate."

The day passed quietly; early in the evening the orchestra began to assemble. No one seemed more excited than the grandmother.

"Think how long the dear little things have worked, Minerva," she said when she heard them tuning the instruments before the concert. She had invited the parents of every child who was to play; and it was amusing, as the little orchestra sat impatiently waiting for the signal from Mr. Jack to begin, to see how anxiously each father and mother watched their own.

The trombone player's father worked his great arm up and down, with such a serious expression on his jolly face that the patties' father would have laughed aloud, in spite of himself, if he had not been at the same time working imaginary combs. Mr. Hill saw only the pale little girl at the piano, for full ten minutes. The grandmother thought all the music was produced by the princess, but Miss Minerva heard also a flute.

When they played "John Anderson," the grandmother looked at the big fiddle, which was doing some very good work.

The "Marseillaise" had to be repeated, much to the delight of Polly's parents, who could not help looking very proud of their little whistler; although after all her promises, she turned her back completely upon the audience. They played a little symphony in which even the critics and messenger took part:



POLLY AT THE CONCERT.

Miss Minerva and Trot swinging small rattles, and Cora Peterson blowing a little trumpet. In spite of Jack's frantic endeavors to stop them, they all three played some time after they were needed, or wanted, which injured the harmony a little, but Miss Minerva said it was only fair, as they had waited so long for a chance to perform, and it was doubtful if they ever got another. They were driven back to the audience, and afterward made some very severe criticisms.

The princess and Dick played a duet with as few mistakes as they had expected. Perhaps the best thing on the programme was a trio by Miss Tucker, Joe and Polly. Even Mrs. Tucker said it wasn't very bad, only it was absurd not to turn Polly round.

At last they came to "Auld Lang Syne," and they played with such a will not one of them knew that the discarded critics were playing with all their might upon rattle and whistle, which so inspired the audience that they sang as only a mixed, enthusiastic company can sing. But the harmony in their hearts arose clearly above every discord; and when the last note died upon the air, no one would have been surprised if the big fiddle had embraced the humble flute, or Rose Norman's stately mamma had kissed the mother of the three patties.

"I did not know one note I played toward the last of it," said Dick, "I was so excited."

After the concert they had supper, and then the grandmother showed them all her presents, and they were admired, even to Trot's pincushion, which, that little lady explained, "Was awful hard to stuff."

"When do I have a birthday?" asked Miss Flora's father. "I want a concert."

"Will you let your orchestra play on papa's birthday?" said Miss Flora.

"We will play whenever anybody has a birthday," said the princess.

There was a little time spent in finding out who was to have the next birthday; and when they learned that it was the patties mother, it was arranged that the next concert should be given at her home.

The grandmother thanked the orchestra for giving her such a fine concert; then as they were putting up their instruments she hurried kindly from one to another, and thanked and complimented them separately, for the great pleasure they had given her. Nor did she forget the big fiddle, nor poor Joe.

When she praised Dick he said, "I did try, Grandma Nelson, but — but I was thinking of something else." He grasped her hand, and the look he gave her she remembered afterward, when she could better understand it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SURPRISE.

"WHERE is Dick?" asked Miss Tucker, one morning not long after the concert.

"He started when I did, but ran back after something," said the princess; "I know he won't be late."

But the lessons began, and no Dick appeared.

"You are sure he went home?" asked the teacher.

"He said he must go back and tell Joe something. I am afraid Joe is sick, and that is why Dick stays so long." Her Royal Highness felt a little ashamed that she had not thought of Joe since the concert, and hastened home as soon as school was over to learn how he was, and why Dick had not come to school.

No one at home had seen him since he left for school. Miss Minerva started with a frown to the gardener's house. She sternly bade the princess to stay where she was. When she came back, even the grandmother would not question her, so wrathful was her face.

The princess wept; for what, she could not have told. The grandmother went to the gardener's house, and when she came back, she said, "Princess, Joe is not there, nor is he anywhere about."

"That's nothing, I am sure," said Her Royal Highness hope-

fully; "perhaps he has gone to the store. He says he ate his own children, but I don't believe he would eat Dick. How we shall laugh when Dick walks in to supper!"

But they did not laugh; for when Jack came at supper time, from town, he handed Miss Minerva a letter which he said a boy had given him at the station.

"It is just as I thought," said Miss Minerva, after she had read the letter. "Read that! It is my reward for going against my judgment. I did not want Joe to join the orchestra."

The letter was from Dick, and read:—

DEAR MISS MINERVA:

I have run away to sea. I have taken my oldest clothes, and hope you will find a better boy to put in the good ones. I know you will never forgive me, so I will not ask you to; but I mean to be a good boy. I will never drink. Tell R. H. I had to break our bank open, for I hadn't any other money. I left her fifteen cents more than I took. I felt so mean when Grandma Nelson was thanking me that night at the concert; I wanted to tell her I was going to run away, but I could not. Say good-by to all. It is no use to come after me, for I shall ship in a foreign vessel.

Your loving

DICK.

"He doesn't mention anybody's going with him," said Jack.

"Have you a doubt who went with him?" said Miss Minerva.

"Don't be too hard on poor Joe," said Jack; "let us wait, and see if he comes back this evening."

"Do you suppose I am going to wait until that boy is shipped on a foreign vessel?"

The grandfather looked at Miss Minerva curiously; he did not quite like the mother ring in her voice. He had grown to tolerate the boy, but was not sorry he had gone.

"I think he would find it hard work to ship on any kind of a vessel, Cousin," said Jack.

"But Joe wouldn't," said Miss Minerva; "and he could take the boy along as his own."

"Do listen to me a moment," said Jack; "Joe is very sick; it is cold weather. Here he is comfortable, and well cared for; why should he run away in this cowardly manner, only to make himself worse off? I am not sure that such a move would not kill him."

"How can I tell you why?" said Miss Minerva fiercely. "Is it not enough that he has done it? That boy is my boy, and I am going after him now." She arose, and began to put on her bonnet and shawl.

"Where are you going?" asked Jack.

"To the city," she answered, looking at her watch.

"Then I shall go with you," he said; "but we had better wait and see what we can learn from Joe."

Without heeding his advice, she left the house, and he followed after her good-naturedly.

When they reached the city he said, "Shall we go to the police?"

"Certainly."

"It will all come out right, Cousin Minerva," he said, as they walked along.

"Of course it will, unless we wait until they are gone."

It would have touched Dick's heart if he could have seen his kind guardian and Jack standing late in the evening, giving a description of a certain runaway boy.

"Bright, smart, handsome little fellow," said Jack, which was so definite, the Chief of Police assured him they would have the boy

back in no time. But the night went with all its weary hours, and no tidings came. The next day, as Miss Minerva sat with a stern, quiet face at the hotel window, Jack came down the street with such a triumphant walk and happy look she almost imagined he dragged the would-be sailor behind him.

"Where is he?" she said, the moment Jack came into the room.

"Portland," said Jack. "Telegram reads, Found. All safe."

"And they have him under lock and key?" said Miss Minerva.
"When can I start?"

"For Portland?"

"Yes."

"I am not going to let you go."

"What do you mean?"

"I pity the little fellow."

Her face softened wonderfully. "Perhaps you had better go," she said.

When Dick left the princess, he went back to tell Joe something, as he had said. Joe was waiting for him just outside the gate. His face was pale, and his hands shook.

"It's all right," said Dick; "I will meet you at the depot in the city; I must write the letter, and I will give it to some boy to give Mr. Jack when he comes home. I don't want Miss Minerva to get it till evening."

As he hurried away, Joe caught him by the arm. "If anything should happen, you know," he said, "do you think she would forgive you, and — take you back, Dick?"

"Now what do you mean?" said Dick impatiently; "I shall never let her see me again till I am a sea captain."

Joe wiped his blue lips, and reflected a moment. "I mean," he said, "if anything happened to me, and — and you had hard rubs — would she — would she take you back again?"

"Didn't you tell me," said Dick, "that a smart boy could make his way easy?"

"Yes, yes," said Joe; "I don't go back on that; but if anything happened to me, it would go harder with you — and — but it's all right, it's all right. The world is before you; I ain't afraid for you. You could take care of yourself in any country."

Dick's head shot up again into the clouds, while his feet flew toward the station. When he met Joe again he looked at him in surprise. Where was the anxious, hesitating Joe he had left at the gate? This was the companion he had dreamed of traveling with. This contented, agreeable man who knew so much of the world, and told such wonderful stories.

Soon they came in sight of the wharves. The cold wind from the harbor could not cool their enthusiasm; Joe drew Dick's arm in his, and they went on board a steamer. Dick would have preferred to ship immediately, but Joe disagreed. "Leave everything to me," he said.

They staid upon deck until Joe shook with the cold, when they went into the cabin.

"We must talk," said Dick, "or I shall think of the folks."

Joe told him of beautiful countries he had seen, and many strange people he had met. "Where was your home?" said Dick.

Joe laughed a careless laugh that grated a little on the boy's ear. "Sometimes my home was a ship, sometimes a hut in the gold diggings, sometimes 'twas the theater — sometimes — but don't press me too hard, my boy; not too hard."

"When I am a man," said Dick, "I shall have a home. I want a wife and children."

The lamps in the cabin were lighted, but it did not look very cheerful there, and although Joe tried his best to turn the boy's mind from his home, when the little runaway turned into his berth, it was to lie hours, wide awake, with tears streaming upon his pillow. He thought of his kind guardian, and wet one side of the pillow completely; then turning it, he dedicated the other side to Her Royal Highness; and when Jack and the grandmother presented themselves to his imagination, he had not a dry thread to offer them. He was in a comfortable bed, had a little money, and everything convenient in case of shipwreck, yet Dick will never be quite old enough to make light of those bitter tears shed there alone.

Every time the wheel went round it said to him, "Go back! go home!" until he went to Joe and declared he intended to obey the wheel.

"You wouldn't desert a comrade like that, would you?" said Joe, and appealed to the boy's honor until he changed his mind again, and returned to his berth, fully determined to be as brave as any future sea captain ought to be.

When he awoke it was morning. The boat had stopped, and there was no sound except the heavy breathing of a man in a berth near by. He looked about him, rubbed his eyes, and looked about again; but the scene before him was not to be changed in any such easy way. He went to see Joe, and found him still asleep, but looking so sick he was really alarmed. "Poor old Joe!" he whispered, sitting down beside him. "You never had a home." He then began to think what Joe's life must have been. Before it had always seemed to him so independent and full of adventure, that

he determined his own should be like it. What pleasure to fly from place to place, seeking a good time, as the butterfly darts from flower to flower, with no one to say, " You cannot go there! You must not go there!" But now it seemed different, as the sick man moaned in his sleep. Dick could not tell if Joe were old or young; often he had thought, Poor Joe! he has no mother, or Miss Minerva. Then again he had thought, Poor Joe has no children. Now as he looked at him, he said, " Poor old Joe! he hasn't any home."

The tears that flowed from Dick's eyes so freely, he did not imagine were partly shed for a little fellow who might some time be alone, neglected and forgotten, far from a dear home that he himself had thrown away.

He meant to be very quiet; Joe needed the sleep, he knew; but he could not help a little sigh, and a little sniff, which caused Joe to open his eyes. He was glad to have somebody to talk with, and begged Joe to begin talking of the future. But the present seemed a little too much for Joe just then. He began to cough as Dick had never before heard him. It was some time before he was able to go to the upper cabin, where they sat and talked awhile. After getting thoroughly warm, Dick proposed going on deck to look about, and Joe, anxious to see the boy pleased, turned up the collar of his old coat, and they left the cabin for the deck.

It was the coldest view Dick had ever gazed upon. The ground white with snow, the riggings of the vessels glittering with ice, and the docks looking as if a Fourth of July sun would find it hard to melt them.

They heard the gong sound for breakfast, but Joe knowing that their means were limited, said he thought they better get something to eat on shore; he had seen a good deal of cooking done on

boats, and the cooks as a general thing weren't over-particular; and they charged just as much as if everything was as neat as a pin. Dick laughed, and they went ashore, and soon came to a bakeshop where Joe, with no investigation as to the cleanliness of the cook, bought a humble breakfast of which he gave Dick much more than half, in spite of the hungry boy's insisting that they share alike.

"Now, see here," said Joe cheerfully, as the little fellow devoured the last crumb, "I used to know a captain that run from here to the South; if we can get where it's a little warmer, my boy, I shall come up all right again; but if we stay about here long, I'm done for, Dick; I shall die."

"I should like to go South," said Dick, with a slight swagger, due to the idea that he could go where he pleased.

"I shall not take you with me when I go hunting up Captain Porter; I think I can do better alone; you can go about and see the city a little. I will meet you, say in three hours, at the bakeshop."

"I would rather go with you, Joe," said Dick, a desolate feeling creeping over him at the thought of being left alone in a strange place. But Joe insisted, and left him to walk toward the better part of the city alone.

He had amused himself for two hours or more, and was beginning to think it time to meet Joe, when a gentlemanly-looking man walked up to him, and said, "Would you like to ship, young man?"

"I want to go South," said Dick, thinking if Joe failed to make arrangements with Captain Porter, it would be well to have another string to their bow.

"Then you do want to ship?"

"Yes," said Dick, and now he began to regret greatly that Joe was away, for he felt that here indeed was good luck.

"I am after just such a boy as you are," said the man.

"I have a friend with me, sir, that would like to ship, too; a man that knows all about ships and sailors' work. I am a green hand," he continued, with a confidential smile.

The amiable gentleman looked still more pleased. "Perhaps I can find a berth for him, too," he said, smiling in a manner that aroused the boy's suspicion a little; "of course you haven't any home — no one to look out for you?"

"Yes, I have," said Dick indignantly.

"Treat you badly; I understand," continued the man confidentially.

Dick thought of Miss Minerva and the kind grandmother; how they had praised him for playing well at the concert. He then thought of the princess and her father. He could not swallow the great lump in his throat, and did not try to answer.

"Are you sure you would like the sea, young man?"

Dick recalled the many pleasant times he had had with the princess and her father, in a pleasure boat, and felt sure he would like the sea, and he said so.

"It is a hard life, my boy," said the man, with a change of manner; "you would have to meet many low men; such as you never saw."

They had walked a long distance, and Dick stopped to see if he knew which way to go for the bakeshop. The man stopped also, as if he had reached his destination, and Dick looked up to see where they were. He found himself standing before a large building, with a great lamp in front of it, and upon that lamp were the two words, Police Station. It at once flashed across his mind who this man was, and what kind of a berth he was likely to have

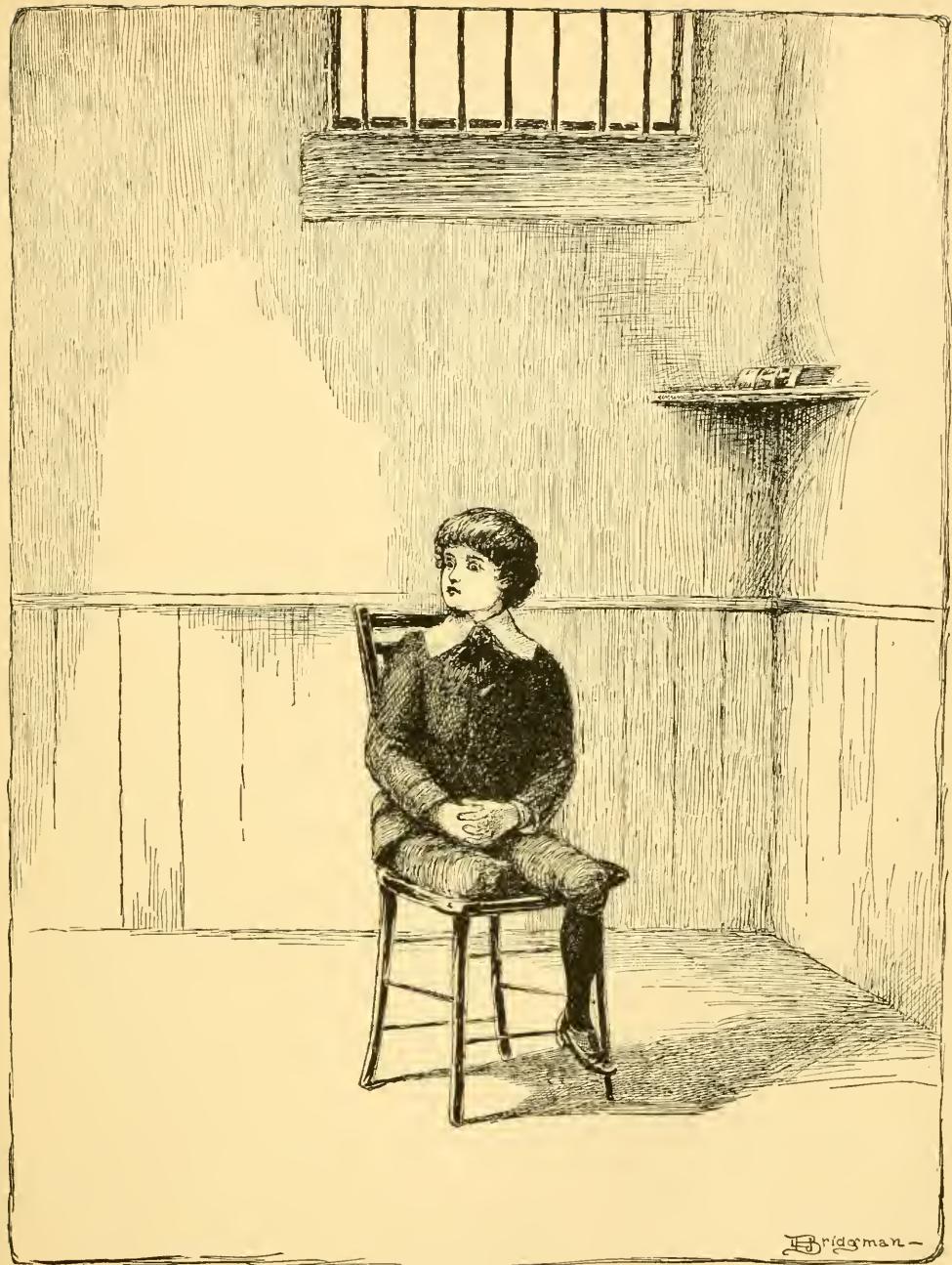
for him, but without a word he followed him up the steps into the building. They were met inside by a number of men in uniform.

One said, "You've found the young 'un, have you?" and it was at that moment the three words, Found. All safe! flashed across the wires, and caused the happy look in Jack's face as he hurried to the hotel to meet Miss Minerva. How many times since has Dick blessed the telegraph, blessed Ben Franklin, blessed Morse, blessed the police!

They searched his pockets, and everything was taken away from him, even to the knife he had been weeks sharpening and brightening, until it had acquired the proper edge and polish demanded by his fanciful mind, to cut away the mast, in case the fury of the elements demanded such a sacrifice. Shorn of this glorious weapon, and put into a cell—the most comfortable one they could give him, but nevertheless a cell—his humiliation became complete; and the lonely hours spent there he will never remember without a shudder. Still there was something about it which reminded him of Miss Minerva; as if she had reached her long arm from the great house so many miles away, to the station, and grasped him, and intended to hold him there until she sent or came for him.

What if she should come for him and bring the princess! Could he ever hold up his head again?

Late in the evening Joe came. He appeared quite worn out. He had searched the city over for his comrade, and at last had thought of the station. "Not," he said, "that I thought they would send after you. I never thought she'd take the trouble to do that. But I thought you'd lost yourself. They'll send after you in the morning; I s'pose they are on the way now," he said mournfully.



DICK IN THE CELL.

Bridgeman

"What will they do?" whispered Dick.

"Send you home; can't tell what they'll do to me. Don't care much, my boy; if we'd got off, we'd been happy together, you and me."

"They didn't take you up, did they, Joe?"

"No; I came here myself; but they was after me."

"I never would have left you; you know that, Joe?" Dick was troubled by the dejected face of the man.

"I know that, boy; but it has turned out well for you. It was a bad move for you—I knew it, but"—

"You knew it was a bad move for me!" said Dick angrily. "Why did you make me come, then?"

"Don't be so peppery," said Joe; "learn to take everything by the smooth handle, and never bruise yourself for nothing."

"O, Joe! do you suppose Miss Minerva and Royal Highness will come for me? I should die, Joe, if they saw me here."

"I'm guessing Mr. Nelson will come."

"Not Grandpa Nelson!"

"No; Mr. Jack."

"What makes you think so?"

"He'll want to be after me."

"What will he do to you, Joe?"

"Can't do much," said Joe indifferently.

"I hope he will come," said Dick, after a pause.

"Who; Mr. Jack?"

"Yes. I would rather Grandpa Nelson would come than Miss Minerva and Royal Highness."

"They wouldn't let the princess come."

"Are you sure, Joe? You know they call her the queer little

princess because she does funny things. If she wants to come, they will let her."

"She won't want to come," said Joe comfortingly; "she wouldn't want to see you in here. Girls, you know, are chicken-hearted."

"She isn't afraid of anything; Miss Minerva can't scare her."

"O, land! maybe she'll come, then," said Joe.

In this manner they spent the long night. In the morning Dick heard a voice he knew well, and, looking up, he met the kind eyes of Jack Nelson.

"It is all a mistake," he said gently, as Dick buried his face in his hands; "you listened to a bad adviser, my boy. I did the same thing when I was older than you; that's why I came after you myself. Be a man, and own up that you have made a mistake, and tell Miss Minerva you are ready to start again."

"If—if"—sobbed Dick, "you would only scold me a little."

"If I scolded you a week, would it punish you as much as a night spent here, my little man? If you go wrong, you punish yourself; the rod is held by a wiser hand than mine, my boy. I am only sent to bring you home as soon as possible. Let's go now and get some breakfast."

Dick wiped his red eyes, and seizing Jack's hand whispered, "You are so good, you will not be hard on poor Joe, will you?"

Jack had not looked at Joe, nor did he turn towards him now as he said, "I never look twice at an ungrateful man, Dick," and taking the boy's hand he led him away.

"What will they do with him?" cried Dick.

"He will not be detained," said Jack; "he can go when he pleases."

Dick went back to Joe and put in his hand the little purse that

held his all. Joe did not speak, or notice when the purse slipped from his hand and fell to the floor.

How sweet the fresh air was to Dick! He drew a long breath and straightened up, but drooped his head suddenly in shame as somebody passed them. "I am ashamed to go home," he said.

Jack told him of the life he might have led if he had gone to sea. "Perhaps," he said, "the time might come when this very shame, that I am so glad hurts you now, would not trouble you at all, even if you had spent a night in the police station."

Dick respectfully, but tearfully, disagreed with Mr. Jack; he felt that anything so keenly alive as the disgrace he now felt, could not by any treatment wholly die.

Perhaps nothing did him more good than the hot breakfast he ate with Mr. Jack.

When you sit down to a smoking breakfast, on a cold winter's morning, boys and girls, you have little idea how far that one pleasant necessity goes towards making you endurable that day to other boys and girls. Do not forget the countless ones—boys and girls like yourselves, with their little hopes and ambitions just as dear to them as are yours to you—whose breakfasts are often scanty, and sometimes missed altogether. If they do wrong, are they not much, much less to blame than you?

Dick may have felt this as he looked with dim eyes at Mr. Jack after they had finished their breakfast, and said, "Yesterday, when I left the boat, I was so hungry I didn't care where I went; I think when hungry folks do anything bad they ought not to be sent to the station."

"Remember that when you are a judge," said Mr. Jack.

The Portland harbor did not look so very dreary to Dick as

he stood on deck bound for home. The sun was low, but it sent a few hasty rays which lighted up the icy riggings of the vessels, and did what it could to redeem the city in Dick's eyes. But the boy was thankful when the boat started, and the darkness hid the gray shore from sight; and it was with a sigh of complete satisfaction that he went to bed, to sleep as only a boy can sleep whose mind is at rest.

The great wheel groaned as it ploughed the water, but it only said "Home" to the weary boy, and he heard it as well in his sleep as awake.

He dreamed that he had been gone years, and the princess met him quite grown up, with her hair done in a French roll; and he pulled it down, whereupon she looked very much displeased and advised him to ship again in some police station. Taking this as an unfriendly welcome, he returned to Portland, to find Grandpa Nelson behind a counter working away at a telegraph machine, which talked instead of making little taps. "All safe! In a cell! Shame on him! shame on him!" it said; and Grandpa Nelson seemed never tired of working it. Miss Minerva walked by the bake-shop, but did not see him, and he sat down on the steps to cry, when somebody shouted, "Get up! get up!" and he felt he had no resting-place in the world. How glad he was when he opened his eyes and saw Mr. Jack standing over him. "Where am I?" he asked, the bake-shop and the old gentleman with his telegraph machine fading from his mind.

"We are in Boston."

"Can we go right home, now?"

"We can get home to breakfast if you will hurry and wake up."

What did Dick care that his necktie was twisted around under

his left ear like a hangman's knot. He was ready before Mr. Jack, and in little more than half an hour they were inside the great gate.

"Will they make fun of me?" said Dick, as they walked up the avenue.

"I think they will, Dick."

"Well, they ought; I don't blame them."

The princess saw them before they reached the door, and ran to meet them. She had not grown noticeably, and her hair was still too short for a reliable French roll; and when Dick threw his arms about her she did not appear to mind that her curls were disarranged. How could she be so glad to see such an ungrateful boy!

He could not look his kind guardian in the face. She understood his shame, and said in her usual abrupt way, "We have had very irregular meals for two or three days, suppose we have our breakfast on time this morning."

"How long before you mean to run away again?" asked the grandfather.

"I don't think I ever could be such a fool again, sir." The boy's cheeks grew very red, and tears stood in his eyes.

"Once was enough for me," said Jack kindly.

"Was it any fun at all?" said the princess.

"When I first started, I thought it was."

The grandmother said nothing, but she urged the boy to eat, as if she believed he had not had a mouthful since he left her roof.

The first mention of Joe brought a frown to Miss Minerva's brow. "Never mention him again," she said.

This made it hard for Dick to tell much about his journey,

which perhaps was best. However that may be, Miss Minerva never referred to it, a fact for which he was very grateful, and life began to flow on as smoothly as before. Her Royal Highness could have had many little jokes at his expense, but a thought of the police station always caused her to spare him.

Miss Flora and Kitty, however, were not so thoughtful. The first-named young lady dubbed him "Captain" immediately, and at the first rehearsal after his return, Kitty Jackson insisted on playing a solo for his benefit, arranged for trombone by herself, which sounded very much like "Bounding Billows."

Joe was sincerely missed at the rehearsals. Even before Miss Minerva the musicians always spoke of him kindly; and sometimes when it was very cold, Her Royal Highness and Dick would get together and torment themselves with the picture of Joe, sick, alone and uncared for, in some foreign land.

Dick had never tried so hard to please his guardian as now. The tie between them was growing stronger every day. He often thought, "What if she had not sent for me, where should I be now!" and the thought would remind him of some little service he might do for her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FLAG AT MISS FLORA'S.

THE winter passed so quickly that it seemed to Miss Minerva as if the great trees had hardly lost their leaves before the buds were swelling again. "Does it seem possible," she said, "that this is the fifth spring that Dick has been here? Six years next fall."

"It seems as if he had always been here, to me," said the princess. "We must have been dreadfully lonesome before he came."

"And quiet, too," said Miss Minerva; for at that moment the front door opened, as if forced by a hurricane, and Dick rushed into the room.

"Flora and Tristesse are coming," he said; "they just drove in the gate, and I guess Flora was crying; anyway, she wouldn't look at me, and Tristesse looked like—like a hearse-plume. I thought I'd run ahead and tell you."

"Poor little Flora!" said Miss Minerva; and she dropped the red stocking she was knitting for Dick, and went to the door.

Miss Flora tried to smile through her tears as the princess met her. "Papa said he thought your grandma would give Tristesse and me our dinners to-day," she said, "and by to-morrow he could start us out with baskets. Isn't he good to try to be funny now?"

"Why, what is the matter?" asked the princess, in a puzzled tone.

"Haven't you heard that everything, every single thing, is going to be sold?"

"What for?"

"O, you innocent chicken! my papa has failed."

Her Royal Highness looked a little pale.

Miss Minerva helped Miss Flora to remove her wraps, and when she was comfortably seated she burst forth afresh: "I am not afraid of anything if I know it is coming. Why didn't papa tell me before? Only think, Miss Minerva, the first thing I knew I saw the red flag sticking out over our gate, with Mr. Johnson's name on it! Shouldn't you think any man would be ashamed to be in such a business — selling folks' houses and beds and carpets, and everything they got in the world? And Dumpsey Hollow, Princess, think of it! my Dumpsey Hollow is going to be sold, and my own little piano. Oh! I wish I could die."

"Nonsense," said Miss Minerva; "what if that flag was there because your father was dying with small-pox — or imagine everything sold because he was dead. Or, worse still, little girl; what if your father had not been honest, and there was no flag at all, but you knew it, would not that be worse? I think you have a great deal to be thankful for."

"I know it," said Miss Flora, wiping away the tears that would come; "it is just the silly part of it that troubles me the most. I don't want folks to know it. If papa had only said it was coming, I could have tried to think about it."

"I suppose your papa kept it from you as long as possible to spare you, dear," said the grandmother, in her gentle way.

"Flora is right," said Miss Minerva; "she should have been told immediately."

"Where you going to live?" said Dick cheerfully.

"In a little house, I suppose, with two rooms and a little kitchen, a little sink and a little pump. Oh! I know just what it will be." She was laughing through her tears.

"And you'll have to pump all the water washing day," said Dick, "but I'll come and help you."

"Miss Flora makes it out much too bad," said Tristessee, with a patient smile.

"What do you suppose she wants to do?" — Miss Flora pointed indignantly at Tristessee — "she wants to go with us a year without any wages."

The princess stole over to Tristessee and looked the admiration she did not know how to express.

"Miss Flora is my baby, you know," said Tristessee, patting the princess's hand that lay in hers.

"Yes; and if we don't pay you anything, how can I scold you, and call you names? Mamma wouldn't let me. Oh! I shall never have any more fun." Miss Flora laid back her head against the great chair, in which she sat, and closed her swollen eyes.

"Are you going back?" asked Miss Minerva, as Tristessee arose.

"Yes; I have a great deal to do this morning, Miss Minerva."

"I will go with you," said Miss Minerva.

"Shall you go to the auction?" said Miss Flora, suddenly opening her eyes.

"Yes."

"Let me see," said Miss Flora reflectively, "don't you buy that easel in the parlor, for it's a horrid cheat. It has been mended two or three times, and won't stick; and don't you buy that dress-

ing glass in mamma's room, for it won't tip worth a cent. Oh! don't buy that old saint in the library, for the man's name that's on it didn't paint it at all; never saw it; that's a cheat. And you better sit down, and lean back in all the window chairs before you buy, and let me see—in my room—O, Miss Minerva! please don't buy any of the things in my room, because I shall see them when I come here, and I want to forget them."

Miss Minerva thanked her, and promised to be very sharp in bidding.

"I wanted to go, awfully," said Dick.

"Why didn't you go, then?" said Miss Flora.

"I thought perhaps you wouldn't like it."

"I wouldn't go for anything," said Her Royal Highness.

In spite of Miss Flora's misery, she rather enjoyed the excitement, and as the hour past advertised for the sale, she amused herself and the others by guessing what was being sold and who was buying.

The grandmother was quite puzzled by her sudden change of tone. She laughed and made them really imagine they were at the sale, and persuaded Her Royal Highness and Dick into buying the most ridiculous things.

While they were laughing and bidding, Tristesse came running in with tearful eyes. "It's gone!" she sobbed, "and I could have bought it, but I waited too long. It's gone now, dear—gone!"

"What is gone?" they all exclaimed.

"Dumpsey Hollow."

"Didn't you expect it to go?" said Miss Flora, with considerable coolness.

"Your father wouldn't let me bid any more; he said I had bid

more than it cost; I could not see who bought it, there was such a crowd, but somebody was determined to have it." She covered her face with her handkerchief, and sobbed softly.

" You are just all tired out, that is all that ails you," said Miss Flora; " you have worked too hard; mamma said so herself."

" Is everything sold?" asked Dick.

" No; but all that I cared for, is gone."

" I am glad you couldn't buy it," said Miss Flora, " you are too poor, Tristesse; you couldn't afford it. Papa knew that, and wouldn't let you."

" I wanted to say more," said Tristesse, " but he stopped me, and before I knew it, it was gone."

" Papa did right," said Miss Flora proudly.

" I thought if you had Dumpsey Hollow, and the little piano, it would seem like home wherever we went."

" You didn't try to buy my piano, too, did you? You wicked, crazy woman you!"

" Yes," said Tristesse meekly, " I bought that, for nobody bid against me, but the patties' papa. I knew I had as much money as he."

" Wouldn't it have been funny if the patties had got my piano! Only think how many times I have made fun of them."

" Where did Tristesse get so much money?" asked Dick.

" She has saved it for a hundred years," said Miss Flora.

" I had a plenty to buy Dumpsey Hollow," moaned Tristesse, " and it is gone."

" Don't cry, Tristesse," said the princess; " who ever bought it will let you have it, I know."

Tristesse smiled.

"I wish I could have staid," said Miss Flora, "but papa wouldn't let me. Did he feel dreadfully, Tristessee?"

"No," said Tristessee, trying to speak cheerfully, "he laughed and joked all the time until they came to your room. He would have gone away, I think, when they sold Dumpsey Hollow, only he didn't want me to buy it. He kept me out in the hall, and I couldn't tell who was bidding."

"It's a good thing that you didn't get it," said Dick, "for now Flora can't have any more headaches."

"I wish Cousin Minerva would come," said the princess.

"Do you think she will know who bought it?" said Miss Flora, who was very anxious to hear where the Hollow was going.

"I think she will know," said Her Royal Highness.

While they were watching for Miss Minerva's return, Dr. Freshhopes drove up to the door and asked for Miss Flora. He said that he only came to say that a very sick patient kept him away from the auction, but he had sent his man to see if Dumpsey Hollow were to be sold, if so, to buy it; but there were others determined to have it who had more money, for it went up above what it must have cost when new. "So you must take the will for the deed, this time," he said, patting Miss Flora's cheek.

"Do you mean," she gasped, "that you meant to buy it for me?"

"I thought I could afford to do it," he said, remembering, perhaps, the fat fees he had received from Miss Flora's father.

"I did not know people could be so kind," she sobbed. "Just think of it, Doctor, there is poor old Tristessee has bought my little piano, and she tried to buy Dumpsey Hollow! I wish you could have bought it for your mother, for it is the softest bed in the

world. I am just as much obliged as I ever could be, if you had bought it; but I hope somebody will get it that has headaches. Only think, Dr. Freshhopes, when you come to see me the next time, I shall not have any Hollow, or anything decent; and when you send in your bill, papa can't pay it. He says mamma must put baby right into pantaloons, and he must go out every day with me to get our dinners."

"It would be the very best thing in the world for him," said the doctor enthusiastically, "the very best. The last time I saw him his little legs were bare, and he looked half-frozen."

Everybody laughed at the idea of Baby Hill going about in pantaloons with a basket, and if any one had looked in and seen them and heard the merry laughter, they might have thought that nothing in the world was so funny as to be poor.

The doctor stayed until Miss Minerva came. As soon as she entered the room she went directly to Tristesse, and exclaimed, "Why didn't you tell me you wanted to buy the big lounge? I would have seen that you had it."

"Was it you my man was bidding against?" said the doctor. "Did you buy it, Miss Minerva?"

"I know who bought it," she said. "I think you can get it, Tristesse."

"I can pay more," said Tristesse.

"Nonsense!" said Miss Minerva; "altogether too much was paid for it."

The princess went softly to Miss Minerva's chair.

"Who did buy it, anyway?" said Dick. "I begin to feel kind of crazy."

"So do I," said Miss Flora.

"I can guess," said the grandmother; "Princess bought it."

"Is that so? Did you buy it, Princess?" cried Miss Flora.

"Did I?" she asked, anxiously appealing to Miss Minerva.

"I bought it for you."

"It is all right, then, Flora, all right," said the princess. "I did not dare to tell you, for fear somebody else would get it."

"Didn't you run after me and tell me you would give me your violin and pearl ring as security?" said Miss Minerva, in a business tone.

"Yes, yes; but I was afraid somebody might buy it before you got there."

"Tristesse ran it up pretty high for me, or else the doctor's man, but I thought I could hold on to the violin until you paid me, so I kept on bidding."

"Tristesse won't care now, so long as Flora gets it," said the princess.

"You shall not give it to me!" said Miss Flora. "Mamma can't have any of her things, and for me to have my piano and Dumpsey Hollow both, is too much. I won't take it."

"Who bought the house?" asked the doctor.

"See if you can guess," said Miss Minerva, turning to the grandmother.

"I never guess anything right," said the old lady; "Jack Nelson."

"Papa!" exclaimed the princess.

"Yes; your papa. I thought some of buying it for Dick and me, but it was a little too large."

"Why did he buy it, Cousin?" said the princess. "Grandma wouldn't leave here."

"It was too good a bargain to lose," said Miss Minerva. "He bought almost everything."

"Did you tell him about the window chairs?" said Miss Flora.

"Yes; and the old saint and the easel; but he bought them all."

Miss Flora tried to smile, but her head dropped wearily, and her tears fell fast.

"I wouldn't cry," said Dick; "your father is an awful smart man. Before you know it, he will be rich again."

"I know I am silly, but I can't help it," she said.

"You should be very proud of your father, Flora," said Miss Minerva. "There were many people at your house to-day, and every one there thought, or said, Mr. Hill is an honest man! Would you rather they would say, Mr. Hill is a rich man?"

"O, no, no!" said Miss Flora, "but you see I want everything."

It was dark before Miss Flora and Tristesse went home. The red flag was gone from the gate, and the auction seemed like a dream. But few articles had been taken away, and the grand house was still home to them.

Miss Flora spent the evening with her father and mother, making plans for the future; and never had they seemed so dear or so unselfish to her. She could not believe that it was her own elegant mamma who sat before her with pencil and paper, counting the difference of cost between one kind of meat and another. But she felt quite sure that it was her papa who answered cheerfully that he had heard that very poor people lived on shin soup.

Now and then, in the midst of her reckonings, Mrs. Hill would break down completely and declare if they could only go away where nobody knew them, she would not care; she could bear it all.

"Then it is not the inconvenience of it," said Mr. Hill, "it is only what other people will say."

"Isn't it silly?" said Miss Flora; "that is just the way I feel."

"I don't care that!" snapping his fingers, "what people say, so long as they can't say we are using what is not our own."

"Do you really mean that?" said Miss Flora, looking in great admiration on her father; "then I won't care."

"I gave the cook notice a week ago," said Mrs. Hill, "and I shall let Mary go to-morrow. Tristesse must stay until we know what we can do. I shall take care of the children myself. It is getting quite a common thing now, among the very best people, to care for one's own children."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Hill.

"You may laugh," she said, "but who do you think I saw wheeling his own baby when I was in town the other day? Who but Bob Tyler; he is as aristocratic as anybody we know."

"I hope you didn't recognize him, Mrs. Hill."

"Well, I am glad that such people do take care of their children," said Mrs. Hill.

"Jack Nelson has offered me the house until he makes up his mind what to do with it."

"O, papa! can we stay?" cried Miss Flora joyfully.

"Certainly we cannot," said her mother; "it costs too much to live here."

Mr. Hill looked gratefully at his handsome wife.

"O, dear!" sighed Miss Flora; "it is awful hard to be honest."

"You have no idea how hard it will be," said Mrs. Hill dismally; "but my father was an honest merchant, and it shall not be my fault if my husband is not."

"Why, mamma," said Miss Flora, "I never knew you cared much about such things."

"Poverty is going to huddle us so closely together," said Mr. Hill, "that we shall learn something new about each other every day."

"Well, I never liked mamma so well in my life," said Miss Flora frankly, throwing her arms about her mother's neck, who was on the point of repulsing her, but for some reason changed her mind.

"One thing," said Mrs. Hill, "I shall drop all my friends from this moment."

"O, mamma!" cried Miss Flora in alarm.

"That will give them to understand," said Mr. Hill, "that you thought there was nothing to us but our money. Now I consider that I am just as interesting as I ever was."

"Few of your friends will think so," said Mrs. Hill, without a smile.

"You quite discourage me," said he.

"Princess and Dick will like us just as well, I am sure," said Miss Flora, "so will Kitty Jackson and the patties; I wonder what Rose will say."

"If we only stand by each other," said Mr. Hill, "everything will come out right, and we may yet be happier than we have ever been."

"I shall try to do my duty," said Mrs. Hill tearfully.

"And I will try to make fun with you, papa," said Miss Flora.

CHAPTER XXV.

MISS FLORA HAS CALLERS.

It was Saturday, and there was no school. The princess had come to help Miss Flora arrange things in her new home. It was a small cottage house, where for some years Mr. Hill's gardener had lived.

Miss Flora's room was a pleasant little chamber facing south, and Her Royal Highness said as she looked about, "This looks as if you were pretty rich, I think."

"I know it," said Miss Flora; "but it is only because I have Dumpsey Hollow here. My piano is in the parlor. It is just the right size for this house; I don't believe we could get the big one in the front door. I am ashamed to have so much and mamma has so little. Princess, mamma never was so good before, but"—Miss Flora dropped her voice to almost a whisper—"she acts so funny; she won't let anybody come to see us; she didn't want you to come."

"Why, Flora, then why did you send for me?"

Miss Flora smiled shrewdly, and said, "It's better for her."

The princess was very much impressed by Miss Flora's manner, but hinted that she did not quite understand her.

"Mamma is the proudest woman I ever saw," continued Miss Flora, in a low tone; "she won't let me go to school until papa can

pay for it, and Cousin Daisy said — I heard her say it — that mamma might let me go, for what papa had done for her; but mamma only cried, and said, No; I call that silly. Cousin Daisy got just as red in the face, and said, ‘Are you willing that I should owe you always, when it is so hard for you even to take so little from me?’ Something like that. Pretty good, wasn’t it? Cousin Daisy made those curtains out of some old muslin skirts. Do you like them?’

“I think they are beautiful,” said the princess. “I didn’t like those you had before as well; they were so thick the sun couldn’t get in; I like lots of light.”

“Yes, I like the light,” said Miss Flora, “but I do like things that cost a good deal. But, Princess, I am going to be awful good. You need not laugh; you see if I don’t. I shall never let papa know that I don’t like this house just as well as ours; but, Princess Nelson, I think it’s a horrible, poky little hole, and the parlor is as ridiculous as the patties’. After I go to bed I cry, I tell you. Now just tell me, if you can, where I can hang mamma’s picture in this room.”

“I should think right over the bed,” said the princess, looking about.

“Yes; that’s where I thought; and I can reach up every morning and dust it before I am out of bed. It will hang low enough, I’m sure. Papa and I try to make fun all the time. I wish mamma could. Don’t you think it’s a splendid thing, Princess?”

“Yes; because if you laugh, you can’t cry,” said Her Royal Highness sagely.

“Mamma can. While she is crying, papa makes her laugh, and sometimes you can’t tell which she means. Look here, Prin-

cess, what shall I do without a mantel-piece? Oh! we've got a good joke on mamma. When papa built this house, he asked her if one mantel-piece in the house would be enough. Mamma said, of course it would; one mantel was enough for the kind of people that would live here. So papa only had a mantel put in the parlor. (Mamma calls it the sitting-room, but I call it the parlor.) When we stand round holding things and looking for mantels, papa laughs as if he would die, and says one mantel-piece is enough for the kind of people that would live here. He makes us laugh when we don't want to much. Princess, think if your folks had lost all their money, how should you feel?"

"It would not be so bad for me as for you, Flora, for I never had such beautiful things as you had. This is as good as my room, don't you think so?"

"No," said Miss Flora candidly, "I don't. Your room is large, and this is small. Your room has a mantel-piece, and this hasn't any. Your room has a fireplace; that always looks like rich folks; I have got to have a little stove." She groaned dismally, but recovered quickly and said, "Your room has got some old portraits that I wouldn't look at before I went to sleep, for a hundred dollars."

The princess laughed, and said, "I want to tell you something I did once. When I was a little girl—a little bit of a thing—I was afraid of that old man in the corner; I kept thinking he was a mean man or he would not be in the corner. So when I said my prayers, I asked the old lady to please take care of me after I went to sleep, and to look out that the old man didn't come after me. Sometimes I dreamed that the old lady walked out of her frame and came and sat side of the bed to keep the old man away. One night I dreamt that the old man walked out of his frame and

wouldn't let the old lady come near me. I think I screamed out, for papa and Grandma both came, and I had to tell them the portraits were after me.

"Then Grandma said they were her father and mother, and they would feel sorry if they knew I was afraid of them, but if I wanted her to do it, she would take them away and hang them somewhere else. But I thought, Flora, when I was old and dead, I should feel dreadfully if children were afraid of my picture, and I wouldn't tell them to take them away. Now I am never afraid of them."

"You are the queerest girl in the world!" said Miss Flora. "Think of it, Princess, your great-grandmother! Why, she must be awfully dead by this time. Well, I won't have my picture taken after I'm old, and leave it hanging round, scaring poor children almost to death."

"Wouldn't you like to see how your grandmother's mother looked, Flora?"

"Not if she looked like the little black profile Grandma has in her album. Why, Princess, a whole portrait of her as big as your great-grandmother's, would scare me to death. I don't think homely folks have any right to have their pictures taken."

"Why, Flora Hill, you wicked girl!"

"No, it isn't wicked," said Miss Flora persistently. "Papa's cousin in France sent me her photograph—a big one—oh! so homely. It used to fall over all the time, trying to hide, and papa made me have it on my mantel-piece. That is one reason I'm glad I haven't any mantel here; I shall not have to see that round. I never made her take one of mine."

"You are so funny!" said the princess, wiping her eyes.

"Don't cry about it," said Miss Flora, in high glee; "I won't give it to you."

"I am afraid we are not working very hard," said the princess to Tristesse, who opened the door, and, handing Miss Flora a little note, said the three patties were at the door.

"They want to come in, I suppose," said Miss Flora gloomily. "They just want to see what we have left. Send them home, Tristesse."

"O, no, no!" said Tristesse gently.

"We were having such a good time," sighed Miss Flora, opening Patty's note and reading aloud:

DEAR FLORA :

We should like to see you if you feel well enough to see us.

Your loving

PATTY.

"Who said I was sick, Tristesse?"

"Patty is so kind," said the princess, "perhaps she thought all this moving might have made you sick."

"She has a soft little heart," said Tristesse.

"And a soft little head," said Miss Flora. "Well, let them come, and let them look around, and see all they can; it won't tire them."

"Do you want them up here?" asked Tristesse, smiling.

"Yes; let them come up here, and I will sit every one of them on Dumpsey Hollow. No, I will sit them on the bed, and they can look at Dumpsey Hollow; it is all that's fit to be seen here."

The patties came in solemnly, and waited without a smile on their round faces, for Tristesse to tell them which way to go.

Never in their short lives had they known anything that had impressed them more than the grandeur of Miss Flora's surroundings. And now it was gone—all gone! But if any vague impression dwelt in their minds that Miss Flora had been swept away with the household furniture and luxury, it must have been suddenly dispelled as their friend met them at the top of the narrow stairs, as they were coming up so softly, in solemn file, and exclaimed, "Nobody's dead; step along!"

"Why, you are just the same!" cried Patty in delight.

"Exactly the same," cried Polly.

"I thought you didn't have any house," said Dolly indignantly.

They all laughed, and in the confusion Miss Flora didn't notice where they seated themselves.

"I was afraid, maybe," said Patty with hesitation, "that you wouldn't want us to come to-day; ma said you would all be very busy, but we wanted to come, for we were awful sorry when pa told us about your trouble, and truly, we were glad pa couldn't get the little piano when we knew you were going to have it."

"Truly," said Polly.

"And Patty is going to wash your paint for you," said Dolly.

"O, no!" said Patty, turning very red.

"You said so last night," said the irrepressible Dolly.

"I said I thought you didn't have any hired girl now," stammered Patty, "and when you move you have to clean so much; and I knew you and your ma never did it, and I can clean very well, so I thought I could help you; but—you see"—poor Patty stopped short in confusion.

"You don't suppose I would let you clean paint, and not clean it myself, do you?" cried Miss Flora.

"I clean a little every week," said Patty, "and you never did it at all."

"Is it fun?" asked Miss Flora suddenly.

"No, indeed!" declared Patty in solemn surprise, which was immediately reflected in the faces of the other patties.

"Now, if you please," said Miss Flora, "will you tell me why you thought I wouldn't be the same?"

"I can't tell you why," said Patty, "but I thought you had everything so beautiful before, and didn't have to care for anybody, and pa said now your pa had lost everything, and I was afraid you would be different; but I am sure this house is nice; why, it is as nice as ours."

Miss Flora actually groaned. Her house as good as the patties! Then she suddenly asked herself savagely, why she should expect things so much better than the patties; was she herself really so much better?

"I wish we could have such pretty curtains in our room, Polly," said Patty. Never before would she thought of wishing for anything Miss Flora had.

"I think they are lovely," said the princess.

"They are made out of old muslin skirts," said Miss Flora, with a touch of sarcasm in her voice which was wholly lost on the patties; "hasn't your mamma any old muslin dress? That red ribbon is an old sash."

"I got a sash with barberry sauce on it," said Dolly, thinking perhaps the hard service her ribbon had seen would make it as desirable as the age of Miss Flora's.

"Cut out the barberry sauce and it will be just the thing," said Miss Flora.

"I don't believe we've got any old skirt," said Patty musingly; "ma never wears white dresses. No, I guess we can't have any."

How much Miss Flora admired Patty's simple truthfulness. She was not ashamed to say she could not have the curtains, cheap as they appeared to Miss Flora. This caused the impulsive Miss Flora to believe that she must bring her own pride down a little more. She tried to tell the patties that the princess had given her Dumpsey Hollow; but it was very hard to do. Her own Dumpsey Hollow! No, she could not bring herself to tell them. Every time the busy little tongues would stop she would start to do it, but it grew harder and harder; in vain she reproached herself; she could not do it. She could not say this simple thing to the three patties.

When their visit was over, and Patty had offered to come any time and do any little service for her, and Polly had offered to do the same, and Dolly had given her a piece of cake which she had brought with an idea that Miss Flora had nothing to eat, she threw herself into Dumpsey Hollow and said, "Princess, I am just like mamma. I don't want to see anybody. I am mean; the patties are better than I am, and I always looked down on them. I won't let them come here again. I never will tell them that you bought Dumpsey Hollow for me, I don't care what you think of me!" She threw herself among the faithful pillows and buried her face.

Her Royal Highness went and sat beside her and gazed upon the back of her head in gentle surprise.

The two little minds had been running in such different channels, that it was not strange Miss Flora's outburst should have surprised the princess.

"I don't know what to say, Flora," she said; "why do you want

to tell about Dumpsey Hollow? I thought we were having such a good time, and the patties were so kind."

"O, yes! the patties were so kind," said Miss Flora, "and you are so kind, and everybody is so kind. I don't want so much goodness. I'm sick of it; I only want to be let alone."

"I shall not go away," said the princess firmly; "I think you ought to be ashamed to speak so about the patties."

"How should you like to have them go over to your house and offer to clean paint?" Nothing could be more tragic than the gesture Miss Flora made as she asked this question.

"I should like them for it," said the princess.

"I believe you would."

Four defiant eyes met; but they softened suddenly, and Miss Flora laughed. "I thought I was going to be so good and meek," she sighed, "and never make papa feel sorry because we had moved; and I didn't mean to be hateful or silly, but I never can tell those patties that you gave me Dumpsey Hollow, in this world. Why should you give me my Dumpsey Hollow? I will not take it; if I take it I must tell everybody; you may take it back."

The princess had learned Miss Flora's moods, and generally knew how to change one for another; but this seemed far the most trying moment she had ever known. She turned from Dumpsey Hollow without a word and looked out of the window. She could see the grand house Miss Flora had left, through the budding trees; the beautiful walks and the long hot-houses full of flowers. "They were all Flora's once," she thought. How dreadful it would seem to her to go out the great iron gate and never enter it again as her home! She was turning toward Miss Flora with tears in her eyes, when a handful of gravel struck the window and

caused her to look below, where she saw Kitty Jackson and Trot.
“There’s Kitty,” she said, “now you will have to laugh, Flora.”

“I always laugh when there is anything to laugh at,” said Miss Flora; “tell her to open the front door and come right up, will you?”

The princess opened the window and repeated Miss Flora’s request, and in a moment Kitty was seated in a little rocking-chair by the window, rocking and talking, while Trot’s round legs swung back and forth from the edge of Dumpsey Hollow.

“I came on purpose to see how you stood it,” said Kitty, stopping suddenly in her rocking and looking into Miss Flora’s face.

“You are very kind,” said Miss Flora bitterly.

“Not a bit, not a bit!” said Kitty; “I know just how you feel, Flora. Trot, can you remember when father’s pump wouldn’t go?”

“No, I don’t,” said Trot.

“You were too little, ma’am; but, Flora, I remember it. Father invented a pump, and we only had the hope of that pump to live on for a long time. It was the handsomest pump you ever saw, but it would only suck in money; it sucked up every cent father had; and when he wanted to sell it wouldn’t suck a drop of water. When he came home we all cried, but he said, ‘Don’t cry, it’s no use; if it won’t suck fresh water it won’t salt.’ Father sold his watch and mother her pearl earrings; and you laughed at my dress one day because it was so short, and mother almost pulled it off the binding that morning before I went to school, and I tried my best not to grow.”

“I am sure,” cried Miss Flora, “I didn’t know you had to wear it so, Kitty; I never, never would have laughed if I had known it. I thought you had it short on purpose. I am dreadfully sorry now.”

"I didn't tell you to make you say that," said Kitty, laughing. "I only wanted to let you know that other folks have to move out of big houses into little ones, though the big one we had wasn't much compared to yours; but we came up again all right, though we don't have enough to frighten any one now. Then father invented a folding bed. Mother and I used to call it the Sidewalk Bed, because father said if it didn't go we should all be turned into the street. Well, sir, that bed did turn us on to the sidewalk, and an egg-beater saved us."

"Why, Kitty Jackson! I never knew you had had so much trouble," said Miss Flora, "but I can't help laughing."

"Oh! that's nothing," said Kitty. "Once we were really and truly so poor that mother scraped the flour barrel so hard father said we had three batches of bread made of splinters. Then we had meal for so many days, father said he was sorry he had made fun of the splinters."

"Is that true?" demanded Miss Flora.

"Honor bright," declared Kitty solemnly.

"I am ashamed of myself, Princess; just as ashamed as I can be," said Miss Flora.

"What have you done?" said Kitty.

"I am too silly for anything," said Miss Flora.

"Are you?" said Kitty in surprise; "I thought now you would stand it first-rate, for you never were very airy."

"Princess gave me Dumpsey Hollow," gasped Miss Flora hastily; for fear if she took one minute to think it over she could not say it; "she bought it at the auction and gave it to me."

"Wasn't she real good?" said Kitty.

"I'd buyed it for you if I had any money, so'd Kitty," said Trot.

"That's so," said Her Royal Highness; "anybody would have bought it for you, Flora. Cousin Minerva could let me have the money, so I bought it. That's all there is about it."

"See here, Kitty," said Miss Flora earnestly, "when you were so poor, did folks know it?"

"I am afraid they did," said Kitty honestly. "Any way, I know our minister did, for he came one day just as we were going to have dinner, and we didn't have a whole tablecloth in the house. Mother had just ironed one, but there was a pretty big hole in it. I put a napkin over the hole, and mother told me to go in the garden and pick some flowers and put them in a vase over the napkin. They looked so pretty I didn't care about the hole, and said the minister never would know it in the world. Mother said what if he should lift the vase to smell of the roses. Then she trained some green so he couldn't take up the vase without spoiling it, and we thought everything was all right and asked him in to dinner; just as he sat down at the table, Trot pointed over to the vase and said to him, 'Minister, Minister, hole under zem roses!' I never shall forget how father laughed. He said it was no use for us to put on airs, and then he told the minister all about it. Then the minister told us some funny stories about his wife when they were poor, and we had a splendid time."

"I am glad you came over," said Miss Flora; "I wish you had come before."

"I thought first I would write you, but you know how I hate to write. I don't feel very sorry for you now. You are as well off as anybody I know, except the princess; she's got such a fearful backer—that great-cousin of hers—she'll never be poor; but she doesn't need to come down."

"Doesn't need to come down! Did I need to come down?" cried Miss Flora.

"Just a peg," said Kitty coolly; "just a peg, Miss Hill."

"Why, Kitty," said Miss Flora humbly, "what did I do?"

"I won't say anything about you," said Kitty, "but before father invented the pump I felt bigger than lots of girls, and good nice girls, too, that live in this town"—

"Well," said Miss Flora.

"That pump," said Kitty, laughing, "took a good deal of nonsense out of me, but not all; it left some for the Sidewalk Bed—that bed had to take the nonsense out of us, for it took everything we had."

"I always felt above the patties," said Miss Flora; "I don't know why, but I can't help it."

"You've got to lose Dumpsey Hollow and those fine curtains," said Kitty, with a serio-comic look.

"I can't help laughing," said Miss Flora, "but I shall get mad pretty soon."

"Then we better go, Trot," said Kitty, rising.

"No, don't go," said Miss Flora, laying her hand on Kitty's arm; "tell me truly, don't you feel above anybody; don't you feel as if you were better than some of the girls you know? Truly now, Kitty?"

"Yes, I do," said Kitty softly, "but, Flora, father is going to invent something, I know by the looks of him. We've got to go down again; after that I shall not have any nonsense left in me. I won't feel above you after that, Flora."

"You ridiculous girl!" said Miss Flora; "do you think the princess feels above any one—do you, Princess?"

"Why, no!" said Her Royal Highness.

"I have watched her," said Kitty; "she really does not."

"I do," said Miss Flora; "I can't help it. I do; I will; I always shall! I want to be decent, too."

"I can't let Trot hear such talk," said Kitty, rolling her brown eyes in such a comical manner the princess and Miss Flora were convulsed with laughter as she dragged Trot toward the door, "I am going to bring her up right. I mean to take all the nonsense out of her while she's little, then pumps and sidewalk beds won't have anything to do for her."

Trot seemed quite willing to trust her fate in Kitty's hands, for she held on to her sister, smiling a farewell over her shoulder, at her friends, who watched them from the window until Kitty suddenly jerked her round a corner.

"Did you ever like Kitty so well?" asked Miss Flora, as Trot's chubby feet disappeared.

"I didn't know she could be so funny and so good," said the princess. "I do like her better than I ever did."

"Do you think I could ever be like that, Princess?"

"I think you are just as good, Flora."

"You know better. But I shall try to be just like Kitty Jackson before papa, it would please him so much. But if we only had tablecloths with holes, and no flour, I should die, I should feel so ashamed."

"But if you couldn't help it, Flora?"

"It wouldn't make any difference."

"Yes, it would."

"But I do perfectly admire Kitty Jackson!"

"So do I."

CHAPTER XXVI.

JOE.

AFTER the princess had gone, Miss Flora sat down in her little room by the window and looked out. Her heart was full of good resolutions. She looked over to the grand house, with its closely-drawn curtains, and thought it seemed lonely there. The only living thing was her father's great dog, chained at the dog-house. He walked back and forth the length of his short chain, and whined piteously. "Poor old Hector! he misses John," she said, and started to unfasten him. As she closed the front door behind her, she saw a man go hastily around the corner of the cottage. He went so quickly she could not see his face, but his figure and the worn coat and hat were quite familiar to her. "Joe!" she called, running after him; he did not turn, but walked faster away. She ran and caught him by the arm; he turned and looked down at her in a troubled way.

"I am very sick," he said. "I wanted to see Dick once more, and the little princess, and you, too, Miss Flora."

"It looked a good deal as if you wanted to see me," she said.

"I am afraid to go to Mr. Nelson, Miss Flora. I was going to ask John to keep me over night, but I can't find him."

"You won't find him here, Joe; didn't you know everything has been sold — my papa's house and everything!"

" You don't say! Land o' Liberty! Don't tell me that, Miss Flora."

" We live in the gardener's cottage; we are poor now, Joe."

" No, you ain't. You've got a good house, and a pa and a ma. You are rich, child."

" Papa thinks he can pay every cent he owes pretty soon, Joe. He laughed last night because it was so little."

" Then he ain't going to run away and leave you?"

" Why, Joe, you horrid man!"

" Nor he don't come home drunk," said Joe musingly.

" What do you mean?" asked Miss Flora indignantly.

" You don't know anything about trouble; nothing at all."

" No, we don't," said Miss Flora stiffly. " We don't expect to be like low people because papa has lost his money."

" That's right," said he, turning away; " don't get low."

" Where are you going?"

" I shall hang round the old place a spell, to see if I can see the boy."

" Go right up and ask to see him. I hate a sneak, and so does Miss Minerva."

" She wouldn't let me see him."

He looked so sick and irresolute as he turned away she was touched, and said, " If you can't find a place to stay all night, Joe, you come back, and papa will do something for you."

She watched him out of sight, then went to unfasten the dog.

The poor beast nearly knocked her over in his joy at being free. He told her, in the plainest way, that something was wrong at the big house, and he much preferred to move to the humbler quarters of his friends. When he hesitated at the cottage door,

she said, "Oh! you may come right in here, Hector; nothing very fine here," and he bounded in with wild delight.

That evening when Mr. Hill came home, he sighed as he passed the fine house where his children had been born, but which was no longer his. After he had passed it, he caught sight of the cottage with its lights, and as he looked in the window, and saw his wife listening to the gay little waltz Miss Flora was playing, while his little boy buried his face in Hector's curly head, he murmured, "Let us not be ungrateful, Lord!"

At this same moment another man was pressing close to the window of Mr. Nelson's dining-room, and looking in upon another happy group.

Poor Joe! He had hung about the place for hours. At last he had hidden himself in the carriage house, and when Dick passed by, he heard something that sounded like an echo of an old quickstep Joe used to play. At first the boy was frightened. He had wholly ceased to look upon Joe as a hero, and the thought of no one could be more unwelcome. Yet he dashed into the carriage house, hunted in every corner until he discovered the man sitting on some old harness in a closet.

"What do you want here, Joe?" he said a little ungraciously; but he repented when he saw how weak Joe looked.

"I have come to see you," said Joe.

"What do you want to see me for?" Dick felt a trifle embarrassed.

"I wanted to see you once more," said Joe, grasping the boy's hand. "I shall go away to-morrow; you will never see me again; I will never trouble you again—but can't you stay with me to-night, Dick? we was partners once, boy, you and me."

"Yes; and I didn't like it very well," said Dick honestly.

"It turned out all right, all right," said Joe feebly; "but now, Dick, can't you give me one night? Thomas will let me stay with him to-night. It can't harm you, and it is the last time I shall ever ask a favor of you. I am pretty lonesome and weak now, my boy."

"May I ask Miss Minerva?"

"O, no!" said Joe, in a frightened whisper; "she would drive me away."

"Miss Minerva won't like it, Joe. I don't think I ought to do it. What good will it do you, anyway? Let me ask her, and if she says I may, I will."

"No, no! promise me you won't tell her I am here."

"No, I won't; but it's mean not to tell. I don't know what to do. Why can't you be like other folks, Joe?"

"Too late," muttered Joe.

"No, it isn't too late; Mr. Jack will take you back, and you can come into the orchestra, and Miss Minerva is just as good as she can be."

"Not to me."

Dick hesitated as he remembered his guardian had forbidden him to mention Joe; still with a faith in her kindness, he said, "Try it, Joe."

"No, no, no," said Joe softly; "I shall go away to-morrow. I only wanted to see you once more, and I wish I could see the princess. She was kind to me; always kind," he whispered.

They talked until Dick was obliged to leave to go to supper. He tore himself away with many self-reproaches, Joe looked at him so piteously.

"I can't stay with you to-night unless I ask Miss Minerva." These had been his parting words, and as Joe looked in at the window, he wondered if Dick would meet him again.

After supper the boy tried in vain to forget the sick man; but whichever way he turned he saw the pale face and heard the weak voice. He recalled the dejected way Joe had turned away when he saw there was no welcome for him. He remembered Joe had given him the larger part of the poor little breakfast, when they were in Portland. "I will just go and comfort him a few minutes, and then come back," he said to himself.

Miss Minerva was knitting, and the princess was deep in a fairy tale. He whispered to Her Royal Highness that he was going to Thomas' house for a few minutes, and seizing his hat, was soon with poor Joe.

"I knew you would come!" said Joe joyfully; "I knew you would come!"

Dick heard Thomas and his wife in a bedroom near; they had left the lamp and a newspaper on the table for Joe.

"Let us go into my room," said Joe. "It—it is too bad to keep them from sleep with our talk."

"Have they gone to bed now? Why, it is early yet."

"No; but we better be by ourselves."

Joe started to lock the outside door.

"Don't lock the door," said Dick. "I don't mean to stay all night. I have not told Miss Minerva that you are here."

"Just as you like," said Joe gloomily. He took up the lamp, and Dick followed him to his little bedroom.

How often had they sat together in this little room! How many times Dick had listened here to merry little waltzes and

joyful quicksteps played upon the flute! What wonderful stories of sea and shore Joe had told him, sitting just where he sat now. Yet it seemed very dismal this night. It did not seem possible the pale lips he saw could play a gay waltz. And Joe's jolly life, so full of pleasure and adventure, that he thought so delightful before, why did it appear so different to him now?

Dick seated himself upon the side of the bed, and both were silent for awhile. Then he thought he had come to comfort the man. What could he say? He reproved himself continually that he felt so little interest in him. He even yawned and wished himself back with the princess. Joe looked silent and gloomy. Suddenly Dick said,—

“Where have you been since I saw you, Joe?”

“Been knocking round,” said Joe.

“You didn’t go South?”

“I went to the hospital instead; easier working my passage there. It kinder took my strength when they took you away.”

“What are you going to do now, Joe?”

“Don’t you know, my boy, what I must do now?”

“No.”

Joe drew his hand across his forehead. “Never mind; let us talk about what has been. Your orchestra is going yet?”

“O, yes; I wish you could hear it now. Say, won’t you stay and come in again? Miss Minerva won’t be hard on you. The princess said a little while ago that she would rather hear you play the flute than anybody she ever heard; and she said, ‘I like Joe, and always shall.’ She is a funny little thing.”

“Did she say that — ’bout me?”

“Yes; and she comes to me often and wonders where you are.”

"She isn't very proud," said Joe musingly.

"Not a bit."

"Miss Flora is proud; don't you think so?"

"She's a stunner!"

"I saw her to-day."

"Then you know all about her father's losing his money. Isn't that too bad?"

"He'll come up again."

"Do you think so?"

"He's smart and honest both, Dick; the trouble generally with honest folks is, they ain't smart; and the smart ones ain't honest. A man is a whole team when he's both."

"I mean to be both," said Dick.

"Give us your hand on it, my boy!"

Dick had thrown himself across the bed, but he lazily reached out his hand in pledge of a devotion to Joe's sentiment. After they had talked awhile Dick said drowsily he thought he had better go. Joe urged him to stay a bit longer, and he fell fast asleep.

He dreamed his guardian came and let her hand fall heavily upon his arm, and he awoke with a start. The little bedroom was quite dark, and he heard voices in the front room. A ray of light came through the door that had been left ajar and he rubbed his eyes and left the bed. He heard Miss Minerva's voice distinctly before he reached the door. "What can you say for yourself, Joseph?" she was saying in a quiet, but angry voice.

Dick groped his way to the door. Miss Minerva stood with her hand on the little table. Joe's back was turned to Dick, but he could see him almost crouching like a whipped hound before Miss Minerva's angry glance.

“ Pity me a little,” he muttered.

“ Did I not pity you,” she returned angrily; “ did I not do the best I could for you? Where are your promises? ”

Dick tried to reach towards the door, but he could not move. Never had he seen his guardian so angry. Was he really awake?

“ The boy is mine, Miss Minerva, mine, mine! ” said Joe huskily.

“ Bah! ” said Miss Minerva scornfully, taking a step nearer the man who now sat with his face buried in his trembling hands. “ So he was yours when you left him, a baby, with his mother, without food and without money! So he was yours when I met his mother and offered to take him from her and she refused; so he was yours when her hands were too weary to work any longer for him — and she died.”

Joe held up his hands as if the words were blows that he would ward off; but Miss Minerva continued without mercy: “ So he was yours, I suppose, when your old mother, unable to work for him any more, gave him to me — and went to her rest. Who could have a doubt that the boy is yours? ”

“ I — I have kept my promise to you, Miss Minerva; I have kept it, I have kept it,” repeated Joe helplessly.

“ How have you kept it? ”

“ I have never told him; I — I have never let our talk lead me anywhere — anywhere near the truth, Miss Minerva. I have been near to dying often, often it seemed to me, but I didn’t tell him — I kept my promise, Miss Minerva. He don’t know that poor Joe is his father.”

“ It is the only promise you ever kept,” said Miss Minerva.

"He was my boy, you know," said Joe, raising his head a little, "an' I was alone. No home — no home!"

"Whose fault that you had no home?" Miss Minerva asked the question bitterly.

"Ain't it all the harder to bear because I did it?" said Joe meekly.

She made an exclamation not wholly sympathetic.

"Promise me one thing, Miss Minerva — just one thing; that the boy shall never know I am his father. When we was away, he told me that his father wasn't dead; that some day he might come home a great man. 'Don't you think my father ought to be a smart man, Joe?' says he. 'Yes,' says I; 'Dick,' says I, 'he ought to be the President.' 'I shall hunt for him when I am a man,' says he. I couldn't ask him what he would do if he was poor like me, and a nobody. I did not forget my promise, Miss Minerva; I wouldn't try to lead up to the truth."

"Why did you take him away?"

"I didn't see much of him — he was my boy, you know, Miss Minerva. I used to look in the winder and see him laughing and talking with all of 'em, so grand — and I standing outside; I wanted to get him away where I could feel that he was mine — all mine."

Dick had seen and heard all; but the words were like words heard in a dream, and as he looked he saw the figures but dimly. Among the untold hopes of his fanciful young heart, none had been stronger than the hope that some day he should meet his father; that he would return, rich and honored, to him. He had always pictured him coming home on horseback, with huge bags of California's gold carelessly adorning his saddle. He was to be

brave, as the bravest hero in poor Joe's stories; rich and brave. So real had the picture become to him that now in his despair he turned towards this gallant father of his imagination, and cried softly, but bitterly, as he threw himself again upon the bed, "O, father, father! come and take me away." The only answer he heard was poor Joe's broken voice in the little front room.

Dick believed he could remember his mother. He knew he could never forget his granny; but the humbleness of his early home had wholly faded from his mind. Miss Minerva had often told him his mother and grandmother were noble and honest, and he should be proud of them; he was proud of them; but never so proud as of the father of whom he never spoke, but thought so often. And, after all, it was only poor Joe.

He made no effort to hear what Miss Minerva was saying; and as Joe's weak voice reached his ear, although he could not hear the words, he turned away and covered his ears. It might have been a long time, it might have been only a few moments, he could not have told, before his guardian came to the door of the little bedroom and called him sharply. He obeyed her voice mechanically. Joe held the lamp that he might see the way. The light blinded his eyes. Miss Minerva thought him still half-asleep, as with rather an ungentle hand she led him from the house.

The chilly spring air aroused him, yet it all seemed like a dream. "Did you intend to stay there all night, Dick?" she asked when they had nearly reached the house.

"No, Miss Minerva, I did not," he said respectfully.

She said no more until they had reached his chamber door, then looking earnestly in his face, she said, sorrowfully, he thought, "When will you learn, my boy, to trust a little to my judgment?"

He felt still in a dream, and longed to beg her to awaken him, and tell him that Joe was not his father; that his true father was still likely to come; but he only said, "I don't know," in a gloomy whisper, and went to bed.

Long after the house was still he lay fighting the truth he had just met. Like the princess, he had been taught by his grandmother that there is One always ready to pity.

In the small black-roofed house he had gone to Him always, when he knew no other help; and now, surrounded by every comfort money could bring him, in his shame and grief he poured out, in heart-breaking whisper, his sorrow to God: "You know, dear God, what I was expecting. Nobody else knows, but you know. And it's only Joe; it's only Joe! What shall I do? If he is my father, I must own him. O, dear God! why did you let me know it? I was so happy. But I must own him if he is really my father. What shall I do?" And God pitied him; for even while he moaned, sleep fell upon him.

No misfortune can appear as great by day as by night. When he awoke and was suddenly called upon to face again the truth he had escaped by sleep, he declared that he would go straight to his guardian, tell her all, and ask her what to do. While he was wondering what she would say, she came and stood at the foot of his bed.

"Are you sick?" she asked, looking at him closely.

"O, no!" he replied, the tears coming to his eyes; "but I wish I was dead, Miss Minerva."

"You are going to turn out a little coward, after all, are you?" she said, sitting down on the bed and watching him, not unkindly.

"O, Miss Minerva! After all, it's only Joe."

She looked at him curiously. "Well," she said, gently enough, "what were you expecting, my boy?"

He did not know that if he had told her all about the brave man with the bags of gold slung upon his saddle, that this tall, plain-faced woman would have understood him; that she had had in her girlhood many wild dreams of glorious hues that had all faded and left nothing but shadows.

He saw nothing but a practical light in her dark eye, that probably would form itself into a question soon, and ask, "What shall we do about it, Dick?"

"I can't tell you, dear Miss Minerva, what I was expecting, it was so silly; but it wasn't Joe."

"I intended to spare you all this," she said, "but it seems, after all, Joe has lied to me."

"No, no!" cried Dick, "he did not tell me; I heard all you said to him last night. I did not want to listen. I fell asleep, and when I went to the door I heard it all. If he is my father, I must own him. Do you believe it—that Joe is my father, Miss Minerva?"

"I have not a doubt of it, my boy."

The sigh he gave moved her more than any words could have done. "I don't think I care one bit because he is poor," said Dick earnestly, "but, Miss Minerva, I think God ought to have given me a better father than Joe, don't you?"

"If He ought to have done so, I think He would have done so, my boy; I do not believe God ever makes a mistake."

Poor Dick! he was getting into deep waters; and even Miss Minerva was afraid his next question might carry her beyond her depth. She said as cheerfully as possible (for she was feeling every-

thing in sympathy with the boy), "Dick, when I first took you, I said to myself, I will help this boy to grow up a strong, honest, fearless man. Mind you, I said I will help him to do this. I could not do it alone. I have not given you many things that it would have been a pleasure to me to give, because it was not best for you. To-day, if I wished, I could go away and take you where you would never hear of Joe again, or he of you. Shall I do so, my son?"

"I suppose," said Dick, struggling against the temptation to say Yes, "I suppose that God did not mean for me to be a — a different man's son or he would not have given me to Joe."

Fly back, O Memory! and for one little moment let Miss Minerva hear again almost the same words from Dick's mother. "Then it is understood," said his guardian after a pause, rising abruptly, "that we are not going to run away from our duty? It will be hard, Dick, but we can stand it; don't you think so?"

He did not answer; he was thinking how good she was to say "we."

She misunderstood his silence and said, "I know it has come suddenly, but we must not do anything for which you will be sorry when you are a man."

"I wish I was a man now; I would take Joe down South, and I would stay with him till he got well. Last night I wished he had died in the hospital. You see, Miss Minerva, I can't believe he is my real father."

"You may take him South if you like. We will do what we can, Dick. That is not a bad idea."

At breakfast the grandfather said, "Minerva, did you know that rascal Joe is back, and slept on the place last night?"

Nobody looked at Dick, but his face grew very red and his eyes dim, for he was thinking, "He is my father! my father!" Presently he turned towards the grandfather, and said, "Please, sir, don't call him a rascal," and every eye was upon him as he added, "for poor Joe is my father!"

Even Miss Minerva looked surprised. The grandmother was so unprepared for any such announcement she dropped the cup of coffee she was passing, and did not pick it up until the coffee had all run out.

The grandfather looked at the boy severely, as he had done when he first came.

Jack said kindly, "When did you find this out, Dick?" as if he himself had known it for some time.

"Why didn't you tell Cousin Minerva before?" said the princess; "then she would not have blamed you so much for running away."

"I didn't know it till last night," said Dick.

It was a relief to him that the truth was told.

At that moment, could the whole world have been in the dining-room, he could have said before them all, "Joe is my father!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

JOE PREPARES FOR A JOURNEY.

THE bravest hero must have moments of weakness and faltering. It had required much courage for Dick to say to the grandfather, "Joe is my father," but he had said it. Now his courage seemed to have left him suddenly, and Pride whispered to him, "Why did you say it?"

He had gone up to Miss Minerva's room to think it over. He sat down by one of the long windows, but did not look out. Presently the princess came in and sat beside him. He felt the sympathy which she did not speak, and with a tearful voice said, "What shall I do, Royal Highness?"

"Is he really your father?" asked the princess solemnly.

"Yes; he is my father."

"Then I should treat him like my father," she said with great dignity.

"How do you mean?" he asked anxiously.

"I should have him live where I did, and give him just as good things as I had, Dick."

"This isn't Miss Minerva's house," said Dick dejectedly. "It is your grandfather's; you know what your grandfather would say."

"He is your father, and Grandma says he is very sick; I would not let him stay alone, Dick."

"We are going South — Miss Minerva and Joe and I. He will soon get well if he can get South, he says so himself. I want him to get well, Royal Highness, for when I first knew he was my father I wished he had died in the hospital. I wished it with all my might." (She gave a little groan, as if what he said had hurt her.) "Princess, your mother is dead, but if she had gone away and you didn't know her, and she should come back, like Joe, no better than Joe, could you love her right off, when you had seen her lots of time and didn't know she was your mother? Truly now."

Her Royal Highness had always thought of her mother as an angel in Heaven. Not even as a woman with a kind, earthly face, to whom she could go as children go to their mothers here; but a beautiful being with an angelic smile, waiting at Heaven's gate, where, in God's good time, she should welcome her child. It was hard to ask her if a woman, no better than Joe was for a man, should come and say, I am your mother, if she could love her. She hesitated a moment, then said, "Dick, I know I should love my real mother, no matter what she was."

"You good, good little thing!" said he, springing to his feet; "you see if I don't treat Joe like a gentleman. I shall lend him my new bag to carry South, and the money Miss Minerva gave me for a bicycle, I shall give him for some new clothes. Don't you think he's got kind of a good face, Princess?"

"I always liked him," said the princess warmly.

Dick felt brave again, and when Miss Minerva came he told her he wanted to go and stay with Joe until they went South.

"Why not bring him to your room?" said Miss Minerva.

"We couldn't do that, could we?" he said earnestly.

“ Why not ? ”

“ Grandpa Nelson, you know.”

“ I will speak to him,” she said.

They were glad that the old gentleman’s refusal came after Joe had told Dick that he would not leave where he was. The great house, he said, would make him uncomfortable. He was quite happy where he was; if he could have his boy near him every day, it was enough. So it was decided that he should stay at Thomas’ house until he went South.

The next day when the princess went with Miss Minerva to visit him, she found Dick reading aloud. Miss Minerva stopped in the kitchen to make some broth, and as Dick had said he wanted to go and buy something stunning good for Joe, she offered to take his place and read.

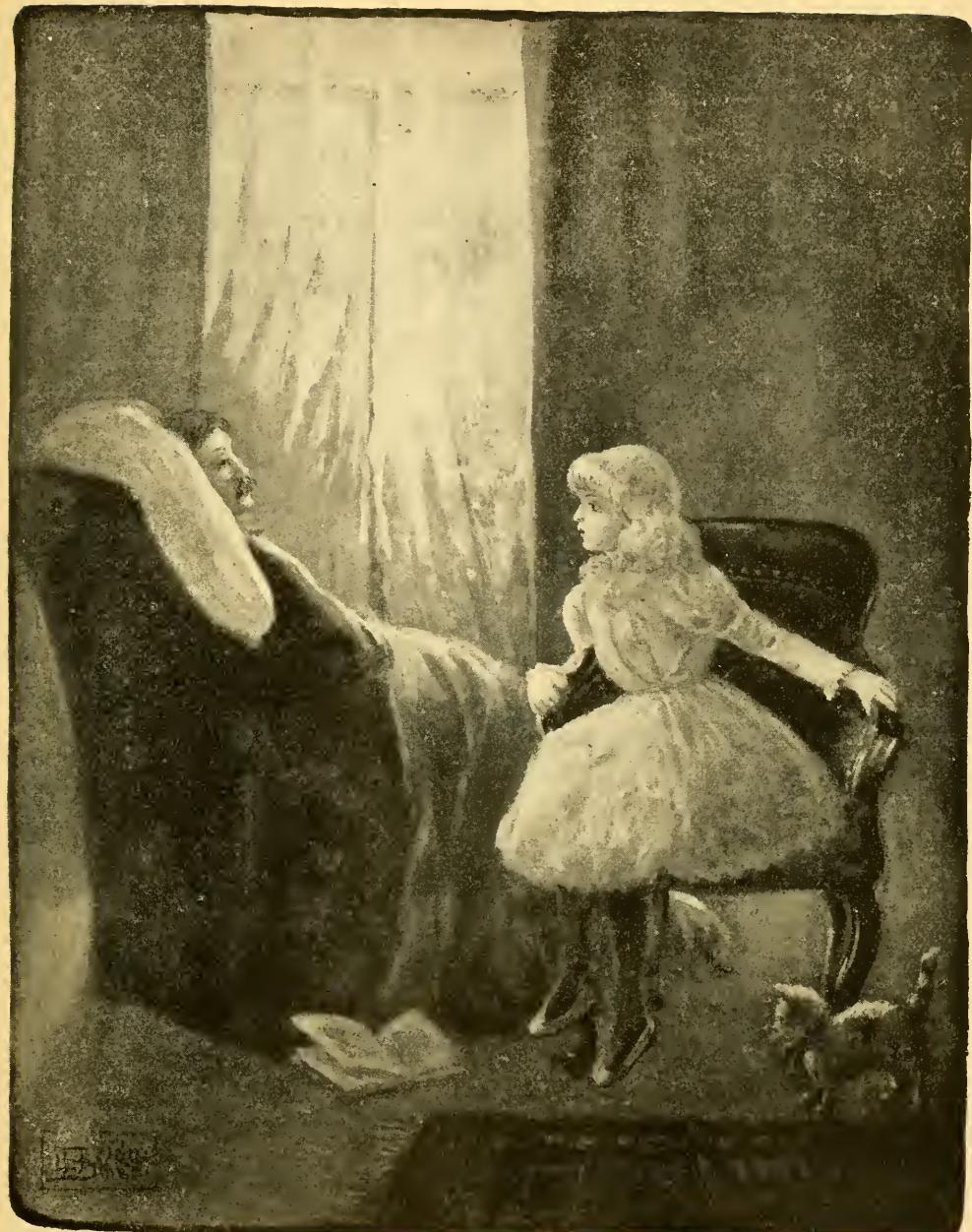
Joe looked very comfortable. He sat in a great chair, and across his knees Dick had thrown a soft woollen shawl. The princess thought she had never seen such bright eyes as he turned upon her when she began to read. She had not read a page when he said, “ Miss Princess, would you just as soon talk as read ? ”

“ Of course,” she said, laughing.

“ When you talk,” he said softly, as if he did not want the people in the kitchen to hear him, “ I feel as if I was more like you (Land ! I don’t expect you to understand me, child); but when you read it’s just as if you was set up above me, and sort of handing down a benefit.”

“ I understand,” she said; “ you mean, you think it’s more sociable to talk.” With a most affable smile, she moved her chair a little nearer, and said, “ What shall we talk about — the journey ? ”

“ Yes,” he said, “ the journey.”



THE PRINCESS TALKING WITH JOE.

"Grandma says before you start you ought to make out a list of everything you will need."

"Is that so?" he said, much interested.

"Yes; and now you are sick you will need ever so much more than if you were well," she continued in a motherly tone.

"Sho!" he said good-naturedly.

"I am going to lend you my little lunch-basket to take; it's got a knife and fork and spoon in the cover, and a cup that will shut up and take up no room at all."

"What makes you so good to me, little girl?"

"I think I should have let you have it, anyway, because you are sick," she said, looking frankly into his face, "but perhaps it's because I know you are Dick's father."

"Who told you I was his father?"

"Dick did."

"He owned me, then, to you and all of them — he said he did, but I thought — I thought he said it to kind of comfort me. He owned me, then?"

"Of course he did," she said quietly. "You are his father. If he didn't own you here he would have to in Heaven, wouldn't he?"

"In Heaven," said Joe, "what do you know about Heaven?"

"Why, a good deal; don't you, Joe?"

"Tell me what you know."

"Why, Joe, it's something you can't tell; don't you think so?"

"Try," he said softly.

"My mother is there, you know, and Dick's mother, too."

"You think so, do you?" said Joe, picking at the fringe on the shawl in his lap.

"Why, how queer you are, Joe," she said, looking at him almost

suspiciously, as if he might be a little wrong in his mind; "don't you think so?"

"Yes, yes; I think just as you do." He fumbled in his pockets and drew out a small daguerreotype, and handing it to her, said, "That's Dick's mother; ain't she pretty enough to be in Heaven?"

The princess opened the worn case reverently: "How much she looks like Dick, Joe!"

"So she does," he said, taking it back; "and he is like her at every turn; he owned me when he ought to have been ashamed of me, little girl; so did she, so did she! But do you think now — never mind; 'tain't fair to ask you questions that would puzzle the parsons."

"I don't know what you mean, Joe."

"'Tain't likely," he said, "and it's mean to be troubling you, when you come here so kind, to help me get ready for the journey. But, little Princess, don't give it much thought, but just answer me right off-hand; do you think she will own me there?"

"Where; Heaven, do you mean?" she said cheerfully.

"Yes; if I get where she is?"

"Why, Joe, she will meet you at the gate."

"No; I don't believe it," he said. "I turned my back on my mother, on my wife, on my boy. They will turn their backs on me; it's only reason to expect it. There will be nobody to take poor Joe by the hand."

She was greatly troubled when she saw him cover his face with his thin white hands, and saw the great tears trickling through his fingers.

"There's Jesus, you know, Joe," she said gently.

"Not for me."

"Why, Joe! He knows everybody, Grandma says."

"I don't know Him."

"I think I should know Him, Joe; He would look like — like Jesus. I think anybody would know him, Joe."

He would have asked another question, and was sorry that he heard Miss Minerva coming with the broth.

"Eat half of that and you will feel more like talking about your journey," said Miss Minerva.

"She was trying to help me get ready for it," he said, pointing his spoon toward the princess.

"O, no!" said Her Royal Highness; "for just as soon as we began to talk about what you would need, you began to talk about Heaven."

"Just so," he said.

"You must not talk any more to-day, Joe," said Miss Minerva; "I want you ready to start in three days."

"I shall be ready."

"No, you won't, if you talk any more," said Miss Minerva. "I saw Flora coming just now, and Dick will be here soon, and this room will be a perfect Babel."

"Let them in; I want to see them, Miss Minerva."

In a moment Miss Flora came in. "I just met Dick," she said, "and he told me the news. I came over to say how do you do to his father." She held out her hand to Joe, who seemed much pleased that she had come.

"Now do tell me, Joe, how it happens that all of a sudden you are Dick's father. You didn't use to be, did you?"

"Always," said Joe, laughing with the rest.

"You must have been a queer kind of a father."

"I was," said Joe humbly.

"Do you care anything 'bout Dick?"

"Why, Flora!" said the princess.

"Well, I want to know," said Miss Flora. "It's just the funniest thing I ever heard of in my life. Do you like him, Joe?"

"Yes; I guess I like him pretty well," said Joe; but the look he gave the boy as he came in, was not lost to Miss Flora's shrewd eye, and satisfied her fully.

"And you are going South in a few days, Dick says, and I wanted awfully to give you something to take along—something nice for your journey; I forgot, Joe, how things were now, and I went to my pocketbook and found five cents. Just think of it," she continued, slapping the flat pocketbook, "Flora Hill's coming to that! Only five cents!"

"I have been many a time with less than that, Miss Flora," said Joe.

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Miss Flora. "A man!"

"That's a nice way to talk to a sick man," interrupted Dick; "beside, I want you to remember, Miss Flora Hill, that Joe is my father!"

"Well, when you get well, I'll talk to you, Joe," said Miss Flora.

Joe laid his head back against the great chair and smiled.

"I wish I could go South with you," said Miss Flora. "What a good time you will have. It will be warm here in a few days. I saw a little grass starting to-day. How long are you going to stay, Miss Minerva?"

"Until Joe is better."

The princess was removing the broth that Joe had hardly tasted, and Miss Minerva was turning the great chair towards the window for the sun to shine upon it, while Dick pushed the footstool for his feet, and Miss Flora rearranged the shawl.

"I ain't worth so much trouble, Miss Flora," said Joe; "but they are all so kind, so kind."

"Yes, you are, worth it," said Miss Flora; "you look so much better since you had somebody to look after you; didn't you ever have a wife, Joe?"

They all laughed, and she said, "I never shall really believe you are Dick's father; and Dick's mother was your wife? Now, could anything be so funny!"

"Show her mother's picture," said Dick proudly.

"That pretty woman your wife, Joe?" said Miss Flora, looking intently on the young fresh face that looked out at her from the old case.

"Yes, Miss Flora, and I left her — I deserted her."

"I hope she wouldn't speak to you when you come back," said Miss Flora.

"She was dead," said Joe.

"And I am glad of it," said Miss Flora, speaking a little under her breath.

"O, Flora!" cried the princess, "don't say so. Joe is afraid now when he goes to Heaven she will turn away from him and won't speak to him."

"I wouldn't speak to him," said Miss Flora.

"Well, she will," said Dick hotly.

Miss Flora opened the case again and looked carefully at the face within. The great eyes looked very patient, and there was a

smile upon the lips. "Yes, she will; she will stand anything, like Tristesse."

"Do you think so?" said Joe, carefully wiping the glass with his handkerchief.

"Wasn't she pretty good when she was alive?" asked Miss Flora.

"She was so good — so good," said Joe softly, as if he spoke to the picture.

"Well, then, you needn't think that she's any meaner because she's in Heaven," said Miss Flora decidedly.

"You think so," said Joe; "the princess says so, too, and Dick says so."

Joe began to look so tired Miss Minerva told them they must all go home.

"If I don't see you again," said Miss Flora, "I hope you will have a pleasant journey, Joe, and I will find something for you."

"I shall see you to-morrow," said the princess.

"I must see about the packing," said Dick.

Miss Minerva gave a few directions to Thomas' wife, and Joe was left alone. Yet he did not feel alone, and he smiled contentedly as the princess waved her hand at him as she passed his window.

On the day appointed for the journey, the earth seemed to awake suddenly and shake off all drowsiness. Although the almanac for weeks had declared winter was gone, she had apparently made no arrangement for spring clothes; now the sun sent his warm rays to rouse her, and warm winds gently shook the trees, and the buds burst open, and one could almost see the grass start.

"What a lovely day for Joe to go," said the princess to Dick before breakfast. "Have you seen him to-day? Is he better?"

"Miss Minerva told me not to go over till after breakfast," said Dick.

"O'Hara has cooked the chickens beautifully, and you never saw such handsome rolls, Dick. Flora is going to bring over some pretty jelly, and the basket will look so nice, Joe will have to eat it if he isn't hungry."

"Everything is going along tiptop," said Dick. "We shall start at twelve o'clock."

But they did not start. Miss Minerva came and said Joe was not quite so well, and they could not think of starting until he was better.

All day Dick sat beside his father's bed, with the hope of youth, watching for a little more strength that never came.

"You think you will be able to go to-morrow, don't you?" he said wistfully. "If you can get there, you will get well so quick, you know. You ought to see the basket Royal Highness has fixed for you. She says she wishes she knew what to get to make it an easy journey for you, Joe."

"Kind little soul!" murmured Joe. "Tell her, Dick, she told me how to make it an easy journey yesterday; tell her, Dick, I won't forget."

"She is pretty kind," said Dick. "She made out a long list of things last night before she went to bed; and she said if there was anybody to meet us when we got there, everything would be fixed splendidly. I told her I would take a train ahead and meet you."

"Tell her I think somebody will meet me, Dick."

"Why, who do you know, Joe?"

"The princess said Jesus would care for me enough to meet me, my boy," said Joe very softly.

"I was talking about your journey, Joe."

"So was I," said Joe."

"I thought—I was afraid you meant something else—father."

The bright day faded and Miss Minerva came in with the twilight, to find Dick sitting by the bed still holding his father's hand; and another day came and went, with more bursting buds and sweet sunshine, and Joe had gone on his journey; but he had gone alone.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOMEBODY COMFORTS MISS TUCKER.

EVERYBODY, even the grandfather, declared Dick had done everything in his power for Joe, from the moment he knew him to be his father; still the boy thought of many little things, now that Joe was no longer with him, that he wished he had said or done. When others recalled the many hours he had sat by him, or the hundred little services he had rendered, he thought, "Everybody did as much for him as I, and I was his own boy. I might have done more."

It was a glorious Saturday morning, and Miss Minerva had sent him to return the many things that had been brought to the cottage for Joe's use. He had been to Miss Flora's, and was on his way to Miss Tucker's, when he met the patties.

"Are you going to Miss Tucker's?" asked Patty.

"Yes," he said.

"She won't see you."

"I want to carry back this hour-glass; she lent it to my father. He liked it better than a watch, and used to turn it and say to me, 'Another hour gone, Dick.' "

"He was the best flute player I ever heard," said Patty kindly, after a moment's meditation.

"Yes, he was," echoed Polly warmly.

"He knows me," said Dolly.

"He knew you, you ought to say," said Patty gently.

"Yes; 'cause he is dead," said Polly solemnly.

"Don't he know me now?" asked Dolly.

"He isn't here any more, dear," said Patty.

"Well, he's somewhere, an' he knows me," declared Dolly.

"Is Miss Tucker sick?" asked Dick, who could not help smiling at the persistent Dolly.

"Mrs. Tucker said we better go away, and we went before we knew what was the matter," said Patty.

Mrs. Tucker was never mentioned without Dick's glancing at his badge which the Diamond Seekers still wore. This proved that he had not wholly given up her case.

"Ma said she should think Miss Tucker would get tired seeing us all the week and wouldn't want us Saturdays, but she sent for Polly to go practice," said Patty.

"If she sent for Polly, and then wouldn't see her, I know she is sick," said Dick.

"I am afraid so," said Patty.

"I can give the glass to Royal Highness when she goes for her violin lesson. No," he said, turning suddenly towards the house, "I want to thank her myself."

He saw Mrs. Tucker at the parlor window as he went up the steps. She did not look as if she had any idea of coming to the door, but raised her finger and shook her head, as if he had been a beggar and she had no bones for him. He forgot that he was a Diamond Seeker, and nearly crushed the hour-glass in his hand as he went indignantly away.

A few minutes later Kitty Jackson walked up the steps, and,

hearing the sound of a violin, went straight up to the schoolroom, where the teacher was playing.

Miss Tucker stood by the window with her back to the door, so Kitty could not see her face, but the tones that came from the violin were very sad, and Kitty did not like sad music. She pulled her trombone from its green cover and made a dismal groan upon it, which caused the teacher to turn suddenly. "I really couldn't stand it!" exclaimed Kitty; "it sounded as if you hadn't a friend in the world. I think music ought to make folks feel better."

"So do I; and I do feel better for playing. I was waiting for you and Polly, but I don't believe she is coming." Miss Tucker spoke cheerfully, but there were traces of tears still upon her face, which were not unobserved by Kitty. "Let us begin; perhaps she will come. There are a few hard places that you stumbled over at the last rehearsal; suppose we try them now."

"I remember them," said Kitty, smiling, as if there was something very amusing in her failure; "I wish I didn't. Too hard for me; I shall give them up."

"There is a rough old man, Kitty, and his hands are like iron; he stands in everybody's pathway. He can make us forget trouble, and he can cure disease. Looked at from afar, he is seldom longed for, but know him well and he will prove the best friend you ever had. And you will find that it is only the unsuccessful people of the world who have refused his hard hand."

"Riddle, Miss Tucker? Don't like 'em; never guessed one in my life."

"His name is Hard Work. I wish you would make friends with him this morning, you indolent girl," said the teacher, laughing.

"I don't want to know him very well, if you please." Kitty whispered this as if the old man stood near by, waiting to be introduced.

Miss Tucker opened a book in a manner that forbade any more nonsense, and Kitty took up her trombone. After a few minutes of very bad playing, the teacher said, "What is the matter, Kitty? I never knew you to do worse. What are you thinking about?"

"I am thinking about you; and I have been thinking about you ever since I came. I am wondering who has made you cry, and I don't think I can do any better till I know."

"You should not say 'who.'"

"Shall I say what?" "Perhaps your mother might be called a 'what,'" thought Kitty.

"I don't think I should say anything about it."

"But I want to know. You are the best friend I ever had, Miss Tucker; didn't you pull me through cube root, and teach me to draw maps that I could tell apart without marking them? And when you had to wait for your money, you didn't tell of it. I am poor now, but I expect to be very rich some day; father says so. I haven't any money now to give, but anything else in the world I will do for you!"

Miss Tucker turned away and looked down upon the long garden.

"I ain't much—I mean I am not much—but I am sure when I see tears coming in anybody's eyes, I mean to ask what's the matter. And if I can't help them, why—why, I'll send for the old man with the hard hands."

"He has sent for me, Kitty, and I am going away; I did not

wish to tell you quite so soon, but I would not have you imagine that I refused your sympathy."

Nothing seemed to shock Kitty. "I don't believe you will go," she said, polishing her trombone; "there's Dick to put through, and Cora expects you to fit her for college; and I say don't for doesn't, and hadn't ought, and — and can't hardly."

"There seems work enough here, certainly," said the teacher, with a faint smile; "but my uncle has found a fine position for me, and I must go. We are poor, you know, Kitty, and I must not refuse anything that will give comforts to my mother."

"Money, money; always money," said Kitty, laughing. "Why can't everything in the world belong to everybody? I can think up a world that would be just jolly. There is enough of everything, if everybody would be fair about it. Here's what I mean; I don't want any more than anybody else has, but I do want as much. Have a bank where all could get money, but only their own share."

"Then who would do the work Kitty?"

"Make everybody work."

"What could you do?"

"I could play trombone in the streets, and make people laugh."

"O, Kitty, Kitty! what would your friends say to that?"

"Don't you see, Miss Tucker, if everybody is just as good and just as rich as anybody else, it wouldn't be anything to play in the street or drive a coal-cart."

The teacher smiled, but Kitty could not help seeing that even the thought of such a jolly world as she had pictured had not made Miss Tucker very merry. "Look here," she said suddenly, "if we will promise to fill this schoolroom, will you stay?"

"I have promised to go."

"Well, I don't think you will."

"What makes you think so?"

"I can't tell you why, but you won't go. I always can tell when anything dreadful is going to happen."

"The princess will be here soon for her lesson, Kitty; don't say anything to her about it; I would rather no one would know it quite yet."

"She is just the one I wanted to tell. I want her to get some more scholars. She is rich and everybody likes her. I know more girls than she does, but"—Kitty began to laugh. "Once, Miss Tucker, when father had spent all his money, we had to go to Grandpa's a little while. One day I had on some pretty old clothes, and some little girls left me that I wanted to have stay and play with me, for another girl that was dressed better and had a bag of candy. I cried, and ran into the house and asked my grandpa why they ran away from me and went with Susy. He laughed, and told me to go call the chickens; I went and called them and they came, but wouldn't stay. I told Grandpa, and he put some corn in my apron, and said, 'Now, go call them.' How they did run after me! See it?" said Kitty, chuckling.

"You think the princess has a bag of candy or more corn in her apron?" Miss Tucker was laughing now, heartily.

"Yes," said Kitty, "she can get the scholars; let me tell her."

Miss Tucker shook her head, and the princess walked in.

"I was afraid you were sick," she said; "Dick said you must be, for Mrs. Tucker would not—did not want him to come in."

"I was not very well this morning early, or I had a little headache, but I am sorry I did not see Dick."

"He only wanted to give you this glass, and thank you for it himself."

Kitty was casting appealing glances at the fair teacher, who laughed and shook her head. The easy trombone-player wrapped up her instrument and said, "I think I had better go; I hope, Princess, you can play better than I did to-day, but it was all Miss Tucker's fault. Good-by! O, say, Princess, Miss Tucker's got an old man for you."

"If you are sick, I had better not take a lesson to-day," said the princess when Kitty had gone.

"I am not sick, and I expect you to do a great deal to-day. I want to review all you have been over. The old man Kitty left behind for you is Hard Work. I have been praising him to her, but I'm afraid she will never appreciate him. If you will take him for a friend, Princess"—

"I will," said Her Royal Highness, grasping her small violin.

At the end of the lesson Miss Tucker said, "I am quite proud of you, Princess."

"I would rather you would like me as you do Kitty," said Her Royal Highness.

"I have tried never to show any partiality to you, Princess, but I thought you knew from the first that I loved you best."

"The best of all! I am afraid that would not be fair."

"Then you must not tell it."

"I shall tell Grandma just as soon as I get home. I tell her everything, and she tells me everything."

Miss Tucker was glad when the lesson was over, and no mention had been made of her tears. She concluded the princess was much easier deceived than Kitty. Perhaps she would have

thought differently if she could have heard Her Royal Highness say to her father after she went home, "Papa, was it this Saturday that you promised me a long drive?"

"I believe it was," said he.

"Can you take Miss Tucker, too?"

"What for?"

"She is sick, and I know she has been crying. I think it would do her good to go to drive."

"Do you really think so? I was going in the buggy. I don't think three could ride very comfortably in the buggy."

"I will stay at home if you will take Miss Tucker."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; but you mustn't tell her I was going, because she isn't selfish one bit; she wouldn't go if she knew I stayed at home for her to go."

"Can't I take her in the pony chaise?" said Miss Minerva.

"I wanted her to go with the span, and have a beautiful time," said the princess.

"Oh! I'll do just as you say," said Jack. And it came to pass that Miss Tucker went to drive with the span. It was after dark when Jack drove slowly up the avenue.

The princess said, "You must have gone a long way, papa."

"The shortest ways I could find, Your Royal Highness."

After supper Miss Flora came over in great agitation, and said, "Now, what do you suppose is going to happen, Princess? Papa had a letter from Cousin Daisy's uncle, and he says she must come right away out West, for he has found a school for her where she will get a great deal more money than she does here—and what do you think—she's going! If papa had money she wouldn't

go, the angel! Oh! how I hate to be poor. How can Cousin Daisy be so good? I grow meaner every day, Princess."

"I saw her to-day; took my violin lesson; I don't believe she is going away. I—I can't let her go away, Flora," said the princess.

"Yes, she is," said Miss Flora; "she came to see us to-day, and said she must go. I told her she didn't have any right to go and leave us. I'm not half brought up yet."

"Did she say anything to you about it, papa?" said the princess, trying to keep back the tears.

"I believe she did," said Jack; "let me see; yes, I am sure she did, and I told her if she would agree to stay I would get her a new school with a big boy in it."

Miss Flora crossed the room to where Jack was sitting, and taking a seat beside him, she looked at him very closely. He laughed until his cheeks grew quite red.

"How many are going to be in the school?" she asked.

"It will be a very select school," he returned.

"Can anybody go but the princess?" There was a pleased, excited tone to her voice, much as if they were guessing conundrums, and she was sure she had the right answer in her mind.

"You forgot the big boy I promised her," said Jack, laughing.

"Did she say she would stay? Just answer me that," said Miss Flora excitedly.

"She said she wouldn't go."

Miss Flora's next question was a more difficult one.

"Are you going to live in our house?"

"You gave me to understand that you wouldn't ask any more questions if I answered the other. But I'll be good-natured; yes, I think I shall live there some day."

"Hurrah!" shouted Miss Flora. "I said I hoped the lady that had all my mamma's things would be perfectly miserable; but I didn't mean it; I am really a great deal better than I used to be. Cousin Daisy! Just think of it; she will be the princess's mother — now what relation shall we be, Princess?"

The princess had disappeared. Shortly after, her father found her in the long parlor with tears on her cheeks.

"I thought Your Royal Highness would be very happy," he said, "to live always with Miss Tucker; you said last night that you loved her better than anybody."

"Not better than my mamma!" she said, with wide opening eyes.

"I wonder if I have made a mistake," said her father. "You said you wished somebody would go and comfort her, didn't you?"

"Yes; but I was thinking then of Grandma or Cousin Minerva."

"Perhaps you do not love her well enough to take her for your mother?"

"That is the very trouble, papa; I love her so much — what will mamma think?"

"The angels are glad to see us happy, my darling."

"And she loves me the best of all the scholars, papa — but I must never forget my mamma!"

She was standing before her mother's portrait now, and as she raised her eyes dim with tears, the beautiful face smiled down upon her. She had always had a mother in Heaven, now she would have one on earth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TABLEAUX AND ICE-CREAM.

THE princess had so many things to say to her father and grandmother that it was late before she went to bed. She felt quite happy at the thought of being always near Miss Tucker, yet when she saw tears standing in her grandmother's eyes she wondered why everybody could not be happy at the same time, and asked her if she did not love the teacher.

"Not if she takes my baby away from me," said the grandmother.

The princess declared nobody could do that, and merrily offered to be tied to her grandmother's chair, as Biddy Malone tied her baby, for fear he would creep out the door while she was sewing.

Her Royal Highness was greatly excited, for her father had said something about going to France; when he said, "I have waited a long time rather than go without my baby and my mother's consent," the grandmother had looked still more unhappy.

"Dear, dear," said Her Royal Highness to herself, "how strange it is that what makes me feel so happy, makes Grandma so miserable."

The princess had never been twenty miles from home. How often she had turned over the beautiful pictures in Miss Minerva's room with the thought, "I shall see these places sometime," and

had waited with a quiet faith for her hour to come. Could it be that it had come so soon? But it seemed almost like smiling at a funeral to show her joy when she looked into the pale, troubled face of her grandmother; and she tried to shut out the fine pictures from her mind as Dick had closed his ears to the murmurs of the great trees and Her Royal Highness' voice, "to stand by his granny"; and as she kissed the grandmother good-night, she said, "We will go together or not at all."

When Miss Flora closed her eyes that night her mind was haunted by the same people as moved in the princess' imagination; but instead of wandering with them in foreign lands she was settling them comfortably in her old home, and I am sure her guardian angel forgave the tear that lay upon her cheek if he heard the hasty "O, dear! what a pig I am. Can't have it myself and don't want anybody else to have it."

Sleep dried the tear and perhaps the guardian angel led Miss Flora through mansions that can never be lost and grounds that cannot fade, for in the morning when she opened her little window she looked over with contented eyes to the grand place she had left and said to herself, "I am not so mean as I was last night; I know I am not. It is a good thing for me to live right here where I can see it all the time."

She leaned quite far out the window that she might see it all, and try her weakness to the utmost.

"Who are you wagging your head at?" came a merry voice from the street, and turning her eyes in the direction of the sound she saw Kitty Jackson and the princess coming toward the house.

"Haven't you had your breakfast yet?" said Kitty in disgust, as Miss Flora opened the front door.

"No," said Miss Flora, laughing; "I am getting real meek and good, Kitty, but I won't eat before seven o'clock."

"We have come on business," said Kitty, "and our time is precious. If a princess can eat her breakfast in seven minutes, how long ought it to take a common girl with only one name, to?"—

"Example in mental arithmetic," said Her Royal Highness.

"What is the matter?" said Miss Flora; "I don't want any breakfast."

"You must work hard, and you'd better eat something," said the princess.

"We will give you five minutes," said Kitty, taking her half-hour glass from her belt. "You won't hear one word till you've eaten your breakfast."

Miss Flora disappeared, and in a few minutes returned with a roll in one hand and a glass of milk in the other. "Go on," she said, taking a seat on the steps beside them.

"Of course you heard about the fire last night?"

"No, I didn't."

"That comes of living way up here where it's so genteel," said Kitty; "Princess didn't know anything about it, either."

"Who is burnt up?" cried Miss Flora.

"Biddy Malone's house burnt to the ground—everything in it, even the rocking-horse we gave the baby Christmas."

"Tim burnt, too?"

"No," said Kitty; "but he went right into the flames and burnt his face and arms awfully."

"I would rather have saved the furniture than Tim, if I'd been Biddy," said Miss Flora.

"O, no!" said the princess; "Tim is pretty good."

"He drinks and spends Biddy's money," said Miss Flora.

"But if Biddy didn't want him burnt up, what do you want him burnt up for?" exclaimed the princess.

"I do hope he isn't much hurt if he isn't all burnt," said Miss Flora, "because Biddy'll have him to take care of."

"I like Tim Malone; he is a brave man," said Kitty. "You know how proud Biddy was of the baby's carriage"—

"She washed for it," said Miss Flora.

"Well, Tim went right into the fire to try to save it for her, and burnt all his hair off, and his whiskers. I don't care much about praising a man that gets drunk, but I thought any Diamond Seeker ought to say that was worth noticing."

"We called Flora down so early she did not have time to put her badge on," said the princess.

"That's so," said Miss Flora good-naturedly; "what are you going to do for Biddy?"

"We want to get some money for her," said Kitty.

"What are you wasting your time around me for?" said Miss Flora.

"Don't want your money," said Kitty, in her easy way; "we want you to work."

"Anything but money here," said Miss Flora, more cheerfully.

"What can we do, Flora?" said the princess.

"What do they do when the church wants money, eh?" said Miss Flora.

"I don't know," said Kitty.

"Ice-cream and tableaux," said Miss Flora.

"That's better than the concert, Kitty," said the princess.

"Have the concert, too," said Kitty.

"Tableaux, ice-cream and music," said Miss Flora. "How will that look on a ticket?"

"Just the thing!" said Her Royal Highness. "We want to have it in the Orchestra Room; do you think that will be big enough, Flora?"

"Plenty," said Miss Flora. "When are you going to have it?"

"To-night," said Kitty.

"To-night!" cried Miss Flora; "well, that's rushing it."

"You never had a sidewalk bed in your family," said Kitty, always with the same easy smile.

"But you can't get it up in one day, you dear thing, you. Why, we haven't practiced much lately, you know, on account of Joe."

"Biddy can't stand out on the sidewalk, Flora, while we practice," said Her Royal Highness; "and she has not one cent to pay rent, Kitty says, nor any bread and butter."

"But it would be a downright cheat to ask people to pay to see a show we only had one day to work on," declared Miss Flora.

"Tell them when you sell the tickets the show won't be much, but if they rather give Biddy the quarter and not see it, they can do so." Kitty's smile was very broad.

"You ought to be the one to sell the tickets, Kitty," said Miss Flora. "I should be so mad if any one was mean enough to say they wouldn't buy one, I might say something you wouldn't like."

"We should never think of such a thing as sending you to sell tickets," said Kitty. "You were never made to sell anything. It's all over town about your telling Miss Minerva about the window chairs."

"I don't know what I ever was made for," sighed Miss Flora, so gently Kitty and the princess exchanged hasty glances.

" You've got better taste than anybody in the world, except Miss Tucker," said the princess.

" You and Miss Tucker can boss the tableaux," said Kitty.

" You better not say boss before Miss Tucker," said the princess.

" This is easy business talk," said Kitty ; " finish your milk, and come along, Flora."

" You better go, and not wait for me; I shall have to ask mamma for some things for the tableaux."

" Cousin Minerva will buy all the ice-cream for us," said the princess, starting off with Kitty.

All day they worked hard in Music Hall, as Dick still called the long room in the carriage house. The morning was spent by Kitty and Polly in going from house to house with the tickets. They drove Miss Minerva's old sorrel pony, but Phaeton could not have felt much prouder when he stepped into the chariot of his father than Polly when Kitty said in an off-hand way, " You drive, Polly, while I count the tickets and write down some names."

When they came home Kitty said they had sold as many tickets as the hall would hold.

" That ticket business would have suited me," said Dick, who came crawling out with his face striped like a zebra, from under a stage which the princess' father and Thomas had been building.

At this time a small boy came in, inquiring for Kitty. He staggered under the weight of a heavy box, which they hastened to lift from his head. He looked about, and seeing Kitty, said, " Here's something mamma sent you, and she sent her love, and said she would like to come and help you, only she's got a new baby."

"This is my minister's boy," said Kitty proudly; "his mother bought a ticket, but can't come."

The big box contained a huge curtain for the stage, and many odd things useful and effective in tableaux.

"How very kind to think to send anything when she is ill," said Miss Tucker.

"If you were a country minister's wife you would find you would have to think of a good many things whether you were sick a-bed or not," said Miss Minerva.

"Don't you want to stay?" asked Miss Flora, her eye falling from the pretty face of the child to a picture she held in her hand. "Run home and ask your mother if you can be in the tableaux."

"She said if you asked me to help I might stay," said he, with a delighted grin.

"What's your name?" asked Dick.

"Robert Somers."

"Well, Bob, won't you just skip across the hall and get me that box of nails in the corner?"

Can the stars look upon the sun with more respect than a small boy gazes upon a big one?

Dick's face was almost as black as an African prince's. It is possible that this may have added to his glory, for it seemed as if nothing could have delighted the minister's small son more than to be addressed by the tall boy as Bob, and sent to wait upon him.

The evening came too quickly. With tears in her eyes Miss Flora declared that nothing was ready; and even Her Royal Highness spoke impatiently two or three times. Kitty did not appear to be hurried or busy, but if she left one set of workers for another she was missed immediately.

Her good-nature was like sunshine; no one thought of it until it was gone.

They were all greatly relieved when the people began to come to hear them, one and all talking, not of the tableaux, but of poor Biddy Malone, and the energy of the children. Sympathy was the key-note. The children had struck it themselves. Of course there must always be a few who cannot keep in any key, no matter where it is pitched, and it was not strange that one or two should have happened into Her Royal Highness' Music Hall. But with so few exceptions, everybody enjoyed and praised the efforts made that nothing but a desire for perfect truth could permit a mention of the grumblers. The patties' father said he knew that the tableaux would be a decided success, and surely the first ought to have made anybody good-natured a whole evening. It was announced as Sairah Gamp and Betsey Prig. The curtain sent by the minister's wife proved a little faded, and a great deal worn; but it worked perfectly; and as it rolled up and showed Dolly as Mrs. Gamp, and Trot as Mrs. Prig, the good-natured audience applauded with all their might, which caused the faces of the two chubby little old women to grow very red.

Miss Flora had read the scene through three times to them, and they had had their eyebrows blacked, and had been padded and stuffed out until they could not stand. The last thing Miss Flora had said before the curtain went up was, "Don't look so good!" but as Trot turned her eyes towards Dolly, looking out of her great cap, and held up her wine-glass in answer to the toast "propoged" by her friend, she looked like a masquerading cherub; and in spite of the disfiguring little black top-piece Miss Flora had manufactured out of some old puffs found in Mrs. Somers' box,

Dolly looked quite unlike a nurse who would appropriate her patient's "piller."

Dick dressed in a buffalo robe and fur cap with a gun over his shoulder, looking at a small footprint in about a quart of sand, and a bare leg and foot, belonging to little Bob Somers, just retreating behind a North American pine-tree, was called Robinson Crusoe.

Miss Flora and Dick looked very handsome, everybody said, as Hiawatha and Minnehaha. Dick was painted redder than any Indian they had ever seen, and Miss Flora's dress ought to have caused a famine in any land, although Trot let out the secret that the silver bands she wore upon her arms were polished muffin-rings.

The Young Sculptor was Dick standing before a half-finished statue, which was only Her Royal Highness partly wrapped in white folds — which any amiable audience could tell was rough marble — with her hair, face and one arm, which were supposed to be finished, powdered to look like the smoothest marble; and no stone was ever more immovable.

"Was it really Princess Nelson?" exclaimed Mr. Jackson; "let's see her again. I never understand anything till it's over."

Miss Minerva was standing at the side of the little stage. When the curtain went down she muttered, "Some day that boy will really make a statue of her, and if it looks one bit like her I'll pay him an abominable price for it."

There was a slight pause before the next tableau, which was caused by little Bob, who refused to put a nightgown on.

"But just think of little Sammy in knickerbockers," said the princess, kneeling before the child and taking his hand coaxingly; she looked very pale, but perhaps it was not so much owing to the

idea of Samuel in knickerbockers as to the powder which she had only partly removed from her face.

When modest Bob found that he could wear the nightdress over his clothes he went quietly on to the stage, and when the curtain went up and they all saw him kneeling in his white gown, with his face upturned and his small hands folded, perhaps some there looked back and remembered the time when they, too, like the child Samuel, had their ears open to the Lord.

Three pictures from Mother Goose followed, and then Miss Minerva and Dick said they would arrange the last, as all the others must take part in the orchestra. It was to be announced as Houseless.

In a few minutes some very low and solemn music came from the little orchestra. The violins sobbed and the trombone groaned, while the curtain rolled slowly up amid perfect silence in the audience. The stage was dimly lighted, and on a green bank sat Biddy Malone with her sleeping baby in her lap.

"That'll touch 'em!" whispered Dick to his guardian as he burnt some powder, which caused a green, melancholy light to illumine the face of Biddy, while several in the audience said they never knew Biddy Malone was pretty before.

So much moved was Kitty Jackson's father that he pulled out a bill to give to anybody who would take it, and the patties' father put his hand in his pocket, that was never known to be very full, and drew out some silver; and even Rose Norman's stately mamma told her daughter to bring her the doorkeeper's box; Rose had been doorkeeper; and when she came back with the box Mrs. Norman put in some money, and in went all the patties' father's silver and the bill Mr. Jackson had pulled out, and others,



THE WRONG FLAVOR.

less excited or more prudent, threw in according to their temperaments or the state of their pockets.

One fat man was so much moved he began to ask about the ice-cream, declaring he would buy some.

The orchestra played a pretty waltz while the ice-cream was being served. Dolly waited upon the before-mentioned fat man, and the work being new to her and many of the faces strange, it was not to be wondered at, that, taking several orders, she made a mistake and brought vanilla cream when he distinctly ordered lemon. Probably life will not be long enough for that fat man to forget the disappointment he felt when he smacked his thick lips — only to taste the wrong flavor. Dolly said politely that she was very sorry, but Miss Flora wouldn't let her change it, because he had put the spoon in his mouth.

At this time the orchestra made a little discord, and a person with a well-cultivated ear and sadly-neglected manners, screwed up her brow wofully, and moaned, "O, dear!" and paused in her eating, with her head on one side and her spoon waving like a small baton; but the orchestra weathered the hard place and ended in such harmony that she finished her ice-cream quickly without another spasm; but perhaps she would have done this, anyway, for when she moaned, "O, dear!" at the discord, the minister's little son who was eating near her, said in sympathy, "Cold, ain't it?"

There were weary little heads and weary little feet that gathered around the doorkeeper's box and the ice-cream box after the audience had gone, but when the sum total was declared to be twenty-five dollars and forty-five cents the hearts about the boxes grew very light.

"It seems as if it must be a month since you came to my house this morning to tell me about the fire," said Miss Flora.

"Is that so?" said Kitty, whose nerves were not so near the surface as Miss Flora's. "Do you feel pretty tired?"

"N-no," said Miss Flora wearily; "not so very."

"It went off pretty well, didn't it? I wonder where my Trot is?"

"She went with Dolly to get some ice-cream, while we were counting the money," said Patty.

Kitty went in search of Trot, and soon returned saying, "Come, quick, and see another tableau of Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig."

They all followed to the corner of the hall, where a huge screen had made a little room for the ice-cream venders, and there upon the floor lay Sairah Gamp and Betsey Prig fast asleep. Faithfully had the little feet trotted back and forth as long as there was a chance of making a cent for poor Biddy Malone. When the audience had gone Miss Flora had said, "Now, Betsey and Sairah, have some yourselves." With the half-eaten cream between them, and each tightly grasping a sticky spoon, Sairah Gamp and Betsey Prig slept sweetly, and could the fat man have looked in Sairah's little brain and have known how the orders were mixed up there he surely would have forgiven and forgotten that she had brought him the wrong flavor.

The next day found Biddy settled in new quarters with nearly as much furniture as she possessed before the fire; for many who saw the tableau of Houseless were as much touched as Dick had hoped, and one sent her a chair, another a table, the grocer a bag of flour, the butcher a barrel of apples. The young lady who had the fine ear sent her a beautiful tidy, which Biddy, with a wink at

poor bandaged Tim, whisked into an old, scorched trunk, saying, "That was moindful o' thim, Tim, for the foire niver left me one."

"I do believe you look better than you did before the fire," said Kitty, as she paused at the door to take a look before leaving.

"An' it looks loike God's own work, Miss Kitty," said Biddy softly, coming out and closing the door lest Tim should hear; "it's himself that has promised me that he'll shtop the drinkin'; an' as I live, if he wud drop that there ain't a betther man walking under the blue sky. An' if that foire should turn out a blessing on us an' purge the sowl of him, I'd not moind the scorching his body got."

"Oh! he never will drink any more," said the hopeful Kitty.

"Good luck to ye for saying it, Miss Kitty, an' bad luck to himself if he gives ye the lie."

CHAPTER XXX.

PLANS MADE.

SINCE the Biddy Malone benefit Her Royal Highness and her friends had had very little excitement. But the last day at Miss Tucker's school had come, and there was a stir in the air.

For four years had the same ten little barks sailed along happily together. Of course there had been a few squalls and showers and sharp words, but they were forgotten; and now and then other boats had come to sail beside them, but they had not staid long. Here was the last day and here the original ten. Looking back we cannot help seeing that they have changed some.

The princess' curls are long again, but tied back; she must see clearly now, for how soon will she be sailing into womanhood! How quiet and steady has been her course. How she loves every craft that has sailed near her!

Miss Flora's hand has grown steadier at the wheel; she makes fewer tacks than before, and her brow grows smoother as the years go by. Her impulsive heart can never change.

Kitty Jackson cannot sail so much before the wind as she once did, for her freckles are fast disappearing. Her handsome brown eyes may fade when she has sailed many and many a day, but the good-nature can never die out of them.

The three patties still move very closely together, although the

largest wears now a handsome coil at the back of her head, and no longer is rigged exactly like the others, but Her Royal Highness' Orchestra has not yet played on her fourteenth birthday. Polly still blushes, and we must not look at her too closely. The stubby little pigtail that fell from Dolly's shapely head has grown longer, and in place of the tiny teeth like bits of rice that shone when we first met her, now two immense ones astonish everybody when she smiles. They look, among the other tiny inhabitants of her mouth, like two Gullivers that have invaded the domain of the Liliputians. The little craft known as Trot has also suffered from the same invasion.

Dick's granny was right when she folded her tired hands and said, "Ye will have a fine start in life." His sails are set; the winds have promised to blow fair; and what hero of old would have been daunted if Minerva had stood by his side?

Time is but a river on which they all are sailing. The river is swift and carries them on whether they would be moving or not. Just now the Rose Norman has thrown a rope to the Cora Peterson, and the Cora has dragged the Rose alongside and they are going to college together, so they say, and we cannot contradict them, because there are bends all along this strange river, that, strain our poor necks as we may, we cannot see around.

The Miss Flora has drifted often far from the Princess, but with perfect faith has the Princess kept her course, sure the fitful little tug would steam back to her at last. Nor was she mistaken.

Miss Tucker's school had not proved to be simply a mental hot-house. "Bring them along symmetrically," Miss Minerva had said the first day she came with the princess and Dick; "I don't want them to learn to turn double somersets in geography, history and

philosophy and still not have a flexible muscle in their bodies, nor would I pay one cent to hear them rattle off the name of every martyr that ever died if they had not learned to care for somebody beside themselves. Humph! when I look back and see how I was brought up."

Miss Tucker had worked faithfully while they had been under her care. The time had not come for them to appreciate her faithfulness.

Kitty was the oldest of them all, but by no means the farthest advanced in study. For her years, the princess was said to lead them all. But as they met at the farewell lunch Miss Tucker was to give them, that perfect June day, somehow they were not thinking which one knew the most, or who had studied the hardest. A kindlier feeling than ambition filled their young hearts.

The dining-room was bright with flowers, and even Mrs. Tucker, as she sat guarding the inviting table, and looking reproachfully at them, as they came in, as if they had made a great deal of trouble, could not lessen their good-will. Dick really believed she had prepared it for them herself, and pointing to his badge, he whispered to Miss Flora, "This settles her case!" But he felt quite adrift again when Kitty said, "What made you take so much trouble, Mrs. Tucker?" and she answered, "Very foolish, I told Daisy, but she would have it."

O, Mrs. Tucker! show one tiny spark of radiance to these impatient young Diamond Seekers before they part from you forever!

"Polly, child, is that a cooky that you are standing on?" she exclaimed, as the shy Polly was trying to exist without standing anywhere.

Polly admitted that she guessed it was a cooky once, and picked up the broken pieces from the carpet.

In spite of Mrs. Tucker's presence they had a merry luncheon. When Dick proposed Miss Tucker's health and happiness, and Miss Flora immediately added, "And her friend's — Mr. Jack Nelson's," they struck their goblets together so hard that Miss Flora's broke, and the lemonade ran gurgling in ecstasy to meet the cooky crumbs under Polly's feet.

They all felt that Mrs. Tucker would never forgive this, but, to their surprise, she crossed the room languidly, and, with the pleasantest smile they had ever seen her wear, touched her glass gracefully against the remnant of Miss Flora's goblet; and the Diamond Seekers must have felt that somewhere in her selfish soul there was a chord which would sometimes vibrate in harmony with the mention of her only child.

The princess surely felt it, for she cried, almost excitedly, "Mrs. Tucker's best health, now!" And glad to turn a corner in Mrs. Tucker's mysterious make-up, and get a more agreeable view, they all smiled with the greatest politeness; and Dick said, with an old-school bow such as he had often seen the grandfather make, "Your best health, Mrs. Tucker, and please excuse all the horrible things we have done since we came to this school."

"If an outsider might be allowed" — They looked around and saw Miss Minerva standing in the doorway. Now it happened that Miss Minerva was always welcome wherever she was well-known. At this little luncheon party she was very well-known, and was hailed with a shout of delight: "If there is any lemonade left, and you are not afraid of having the stomach-ache," she said, after Miss Tucker had made a place for her, "I would offer the

sentiment Friendship. Do not think," she said cheerfully, "that I would make one of you a bit less merry than when I came in; but I want to tell you that there is not one pair of shoulders, in this room, so shapely that some time some kind of a burden will not be put upon them; nor can one of you ever be so fortunate that you can afford to lose one of these friends. No matter in what different paths of life you may be forced to walk, when you have forgotten much you have now learned, and learned much you do not dream of now, when perhaps some of you are looking through glasses, and find your feet less swift than to-day, I want you all to feel the same friendship that you have shown since you enjoyed Miss Tucker's teaching. Dear me! I am getting prosy. I only mean, stand by each other when you are well-grown, no matter how each one is situated, as you have done here."

They had to wait for Miss Tucker and the little maid servant to squeeze more lemons, and while they were gone it seemed a trifle quiet. The princess' great eyes appeared looking into the future; Rose Norman was wondering if the patties would always be poor, and the princess always rich. Who can tell? Miss Flora was once called very rich.

Kitty Jackson looked as if whatever the future had in store for her, she would not worry about it now. Too bad her father and mother were not there to have had some of the fine luncheon. Dick gave a little sniff, and a tear started to Miss Flora's eye. Although the first thought had been for self, before the lemonade appeared they were all protesting the strongest friendship for each other.

For some time Dick had been thinking that he was a pretty big fellow to go to a girl's school, but when the lemonade came in,

and the girls raised their glasses, and at the same time their brave eyes, and vowed to stand by him through his whole life, no matter what kind of burdens he bore, he said, mentally, "They are not to be sneezed at;" and he declared that he never, never would forget one of them, no matter to what part of the world they moved; and his guardian wished in her heart that his sentiments might always be as kind, his companions as pure, and his cup as harmless.

After luncheon they went into the garden; never had it looked more inviting. The poor, dear old apple-trees had managed to put on considerable green; the weeping-willow never drooped more regrettably, while the flowers seemed perfectly delighted whatever was going to happen.

The little circles of box had been full of blossoms trained by Miss Tucker, but her sharp shears had thinned them out pretty well to adorn the table. They sat down under the trees and began to talk of the pleasant times they had had there.

"Too bad we must separate," said Patty. She was trimming Dick's hat with green from the disconsolate willow. Miss Tucker's lap was filled with flowers. She had quite stripped the small circles now to make a little nosegay for each of them.

"I have an old house down near the sea, where I intend to go this summer," said Miss Minerva. "I shall have a class in botany and natural philosophy, and plain dinners at the hour farmers dine. As Her Royal Highness is going abroad I shall be very lonely; as many of you as would enjoy going with Dick and me, will not be only welcome, but gratefully received."

"Oh! if we only could go, and the princess, too," exclaimed Miss Flora.

"Perhaps I shall go," said the princess; "I am afraid I can't go with papa. If Grandma looks No, I shall stay at home."

"It's lucky that kind of a chance only comes to good little girls," said Kitty. "I have had five grandmothers; two on one side and three on the other; and if they could all stand up in a row and weep and weep and weep, it wouldn't keep me at home from Europe if I had a chance to go."

"Your grandmother would cry to have you go, wouldn't she?" said Dick.

"Well, the last one I had on father's side wished me in Botany Bay because I melted the handle off an old pewter porringer making vinegar candy in it."

"Will you promise to go with us, for one?" said Dick.

"Wouldn't it be gay!" said Kitty; "but I don't know about leaving mother for so long."

"Who is the good little girl now?" said the princess.

"Everybody knows I'm good," cried Kitty; "ought to have a statue, I ought, right down by the town pump; only girl in Massachusetts that's fond of her mother."

"Won't it be fun to hear Kitty talk all summer, Royal Highness?" said Dick. "I wouldn't go to Europe. I shall have a boat, and we will go out when it is fearfully rough, and you can be just as seasick as if you crossed the ocean."

"I want to go so much! more than anything in the world, Dick," said the princess.

"See here," he said, "I know it would spoil you to go; every girl puts on airs when she gets home. If you didn't want to go so much I shouldn't be so afraid; but think of you putting on airs."

"I don't know," she said, "I have longed to go for so long,

perhaps I should feel proud. But you mustn't say I am proud because I look happy. I would like to have it so everybody could go everywhere."

"There! that's my kind of a world," said Kitty.

"But they can't," said Miss Flora, with a little sigh.

"Well, it ought to be so," said Kitty; "something is wrong," smiling as merrily as if she had declared every thing to be right.

"We will have everything right in our house this summer," said Miss Minerva.

"I hope you won't dress up much," said Patty.

"Flannel dresses and no French heels," said Miss Minerva. "I want every one of you, before the summer is over, to know how to swim, row a boat, drive a horse, make a bed well or a pudding. I mean you shall take turns in cooking, even to Dick."

"That's my kind of a world," cried Kitty. "I can cook every kind of a thing except a pudding, without eggs, milk or sugar."

"Oh! I don't like to cook," said Miss Flora.

"I can make cream cakes and chocolate caramels," said Cora.

"I can make the bread," said Patty.

"I shall not hire any cook," said Miss Minerva.

"Why, no, indeed!" said Patty; "we can do everything. When it is Flora's turn to cook, I can take her place, for I like it."

"What can I do for you? Do you like to sweep?"

"No," said Patty, "I don't."

"Then I'll do your sweeping, and you do my cooking. I love to sweep, but not to dust," said Miss Flora.

"I like to dust," said Rose.

"And we must take turns in waiting upon the table," said Dick.

"We must take turns in everything," said Miss Minerva. "Each week we shall change cook and table maid. We must let Dick off from something in-doors if he takes all the care of the pony."

"I want to have my turn at the cooking," said Dick. "I can fry oysters and make snow cream."

"We don't eat either in summer," said Cora.

"What else can I make, Royal Highness?" he said.

"You can roast clams on the beach."

"Yes," he cried, "and burn up potatoes."

"When you cook I'll take care of the pony," said Kitty. "I can harness any horse that's polite enough to open his mouth and take in his bits. We will work Dolly and Trot in on the dishes."

"Not all the time," said Miss Flora; "that's the worst work of all. Let's keep the dishes for a punishment."

"Everything will be so lovely there nobody will have to be punished, so the dishes will never get washed," said the princess.

"You may just depend upon enough tantrums from me to get them washed a few times," said Miss Flora.

"What is tantrums?" whispered Trot.

"A tantrum, my good little child, is a sort of hopping up and down when other people want you to sit still," explained Kitty.

Trot grinned, and Polly, who had become strongly attached to Miss Flora during the past year, volunteered to wash the dishes when Miss Flora had tantrums. Perhaps she had got used to having them when she was rich.

"I will wipe the dishes and build the fire if you want me to," said Dolly.

"The patties would do all the disagreeable work if you would let them," said Her Royal Highness.

" You had better go and see that we don't abuse them," said Dick.

" If I could only be in two places at the same time," she sighed.

" You can have your choice of places; that is better," said Cora.

" I can have my choice, but my heart is in so many places. It is with papa and Grandma and all of you. I don't know what to do."

" That makes me think of once when we were at Grandfather's," said Kitty; " Trot was a little mite of a thing. Grandmother told her to shut the sitting-room door, and Aunt Tab told her not to shut it; she looked first at Aunt Tabby then at Grandmother, and was just making up her mind to do as Aunt Tabby said, when Grandfather told her to do as she pleased. I grabbed her up and wheeled her home, in a baby carriage, and told her to ask mother whether she should shut that door or leave it open. I know if I hadn't done it she would be standing there now, this minute, looking first at Grandmother, then at Aunt Tab, then at Grandfather."

" Do you mean somebody had better 'grab' me and tell me what to do?" asked the princess.

" It might save your heart from breaking to pieces," said Miss Flora. " If I could say what you must do I should like it pretty well; it wouldn't be to go abroad, and leave me behind, Miss Royal Highness."

" Next Thursday," said Miss Minerva, " I shall go down and take a look at the old place; anybody who would like to go with me must meet me at the station at nine o'clock. Tell your mothers I shall stay away two months; you may also say I don't intend to have any ten trunks go there. Flannel dresses, stout boots, and a good time."

“Don’t forget to say good-by to the old trees,” said the princess, as they arose to go.

Dick pulled down a branch and shook it heartily; it shed a few leaves over him like tears. “Do you remember,” he said, “when Flora and Rose used to go every recess and stay under the willow-tree? Flora, don’t forget to say farewell to the willow.”

“Mournful old thing!” said Miss Flora. “I like the apple-trees a great deal better.” But she walked to the end of the garden, and, breaking off a small branch, said, “Good afternoon, cry baby; I am going away forever.” Its lithe branches swayed with a mournful sigh that seemed to echo “forever;” but mournful sighs are not what most young people are listening for. A human sob is, however, quite another thing from an imaginary sigh; as Miss Flora turned from the willow-tree, a real sob fell upon her ear. She walked a few steps further, and there upon the ground lay Miss Tucker’s little maid servant. She was scarcely larger than when she had declared she was going on fourteen. A large black cat lay curled up by her side, which spit at Miss Flora when she put her hand upon the little maid’s arm. “Why, M’randy!” exclaimed Miss Flora, giving the cat a box on the ear, for doubting her intentions toward her mistress.

“Oh! oh! oh!” sobbed M’randy.

“What is the matter?” said Dick, coming up to see if Miss Flora had made her adieu properly to the willow.

“Don’t cry,” said Miss Flora soothingly.

“I don’t—don’t want to leave Miss Tucker,” sobbed M’randy. “I ain’t got any home, an’ I ain’t big enough to wash an’ iron—an’ she learned me to write, an’ she dressed me up—oh! oh! oh! I ain’t bright, father says, an’ she says I am—oh! oh! oh!”

"Nobody is very bright round here," said Dick comfortingly; "you just wait a minute till I come back."

When he came back, they all followed him.

"How I misjudged the poor little thing," said Miss Tucker; "I really was vexed that she showed so little feeling when I had tried to do so much for her. Why, M'randy, child, don't cry so!" as she came in sight of the small, prostrate figure. "See, child, we are all friends! I shall never leave you without a home." But the storm in the little maid's heart had been too long gathering to cease after one gust and a few splashes of tears.

"It is too bad for us to all stand watching her," said the princess. But M'randy did not seem to know they were there; her own misery enveloped her like a cloud, and she saw nothing beyond it.

"If she would only listen," said the princess, "I could tell her something — something she would like, I am sure."

"Do tell her then, quick," said Dick; "shall we go away?"

"Yes; let me stay with her a little while, all alone."

"I will come back soon," said Miss Tucker, and they went to the house.

For a few minutes the princess sat silent; the black cat came back, and curled himself up by his small mistress, and rubbed his great head against her hand. The princess smoothed his sleek back and he purred.

"Ain't you Miss Flora?" without raising her head from the grass.

"No; I am Princess."

The sobs continued again, then suddenly M'randy said, "I don't want Miss Flora scratched."

"I want to tell you something, M'randy."

"It don't cost n-nothing to cry," sobbed M'randy, with another burst of grief.

"It costs me something to see you cry," said the princess, "and it hurts Miss Tucker, too."

"I don't know what you mean," said M'randy, with her face still buried in the grass. "I ain't very bright, father says, but she says I am; oh! oh! oh!"

"I want to talk to you about this summer; will you talk about this summer, M'randy?"

"I don't see any summer."

"You don't see me, but I am here. See, M'randy, I am going to tell you a great secret — Miss Tucker is going to marry my papa."

"I knew it a long time ago; 'tain't a secret; and your father is rich and proud, and she will have lots of hired girls — great big ones that can wash and iron, and — and — she will have cooks — and chamber maids — Biddy Malone told me when she washed here."

"I will ask her to have you, M'randy; to keep you, no matter who she has. She is going away this summer, and so am I, but I will ask Cousin Minerva to take you down to her house where all the girls are going, to stay two months; and when we get back, I will ask Miss Tucker to take you. Don't say anything about it now. Won't that be just what you want?"

"'Twon't happen," groaned M'randy.

"Yes, it will. Things don't happen because people don't want them to happen, or won't try to make them."

"Can you make it happen?"

"Yes; I am sure I can."

"How do I know?"

"Because I say so."

"Ain't you afraid of your father?"

"Why; no, indeed!"

"Don't you b'lieve he — he'll beat her?"

"Miss Tucker?"

"Yes."

"Beat her?"

"My father used to beat my mother."

"What for?"

"Because he married her."

"Is that what he married her for?"

"I don't know; maybe."

"Hark! There comes Miss Tucker. Don't let her hear us talking about beating."

M'randy raised her head, and at the sight of her beloved mistress she buried her face again in the grass and wailed anew.

"I have good news for you, M'randy," said Miss Tucker, taking a seat beside them. "Miss Minerva has promised to take you with her this summer. I told her you could do almost anything about the house, and after the summer is over perhaps I can find a place for you that you will like as well."

"I knew Cousin would take you," said the princess.

"And the other thing — can you make it happen, Miss Princess?"

"You may wear my gold chain, M'randy, till it does happen," and, unfastening the chain from her neck, Her Royal Highness put it upon the little maid servant, and she arose, assisted by Miss

Tucker, and wiped her swollen eyes; and the kind teacher fastened upon her bosom as pretty a nosegay as she had given to any of her scholars, and the look she received in return, if not as "bright" as the others had given, was as grateful.

They smoothed her tangled hair and rumpled dress and led her to the house, and the princess' chain flashed in the sun in pledge of the promise that Her Royal Highness should, in due time, make the "other thing" happen.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PLANS CHANGED.

MISS MINERVA's old house stood by the sea. It was square, with an immense weather-beaten porch in front, which seemed to reach out like the huge hand of a hospitable farmer at dinner-time.

Behind it there were some very respectable trees, but none in front, for the sea is a vain old fellow that does not care to have anything stand between him and an admirer's gaze. He was willing the old trees should live behind the great house, for who would notice a few old trees while he flashed or roared or rippled before the front door? and the modest trees were willing to wait for notice until Miss Minerva's young guests had praised his beauty, romped by his side and fed him with pebbles. When he had flashed in their eyes until they ached, they were glad to go and rest in the quiet shade of the humble trees.

"Miss Minerva, you are the kindest woman in the whole world!" cried Miss Flora, throwing herself upon the grass, "and this would be the most beautiful place in the world if Princess would only come with us."

"We must try to be happy if we can't have everything to our minds, little girl," said Miss Minerva.

"I suppose so; I have learned to be happy in any place if I

can only have the people I want ; the next thing, I suppose, is to be happy anywhere with anybody.”.

“ Who are you calling anybody ? ” exclaimed Dick.

“ You.”

“ Miss Minerva, are you going to sit there and hear me called anybody ? ” he cried.

“ Would it help you any if Miss Minerva should stand up ? ” said Kitty. “ You and Flora will have plenty of time to quarrel when we get settled, now just ‘tend to business.”

“ Yes ; talk about what you are going to do. I shall want to think about you every day and what you are doing here,” said the princess.

“ You can imagine me in a hammock under these trees, all day long,” said Kitty, “ while Patty cooks, and Cora makes the beds, and Flora sweeps, and Rose dusts. Let me see, Trot can feed me with strawberries, and Dolly can brush away the flies.”

“ If we didn’t know you, we should be afraid to have you come,” said Miss Minerva.

“ You had better imagine her with blue overalls on, rubbing down the pony,” said Dick.

“ And you in a kitchen apron, frying fish,” said Cora.

“ Yes ; and I tell you the pony will look as well as the fish,” said Kitty.

“ We shall soon see,” said Miss Flora.

While they were making plans and enjoying much bantering, the grandfather came suddenly upon them. He handed Miss Minerva an envelope, saying, “ From Paris, Cousin ; a cablegram. I thought it must be of importance, and brought it myself.”

“ From France ! ” exclaimed Her Royal Highness.

Miss Minerva sat very quiet after she had read the message. Dick went to her side and whispered, "Is it bad news, Miss Minerva?"

After a few moments she said, with an absent look in her eyes: "That I should come here and spend a few quiet, happy weeks with you all was my plan; that I must leave you and go to France, it appears is God's plan."

A feeling of delight shot through the princess' heart. She believed she should soon hear that the grandmother would go also. Was everything to be exactly as she wanted it? Was she to go with Cousin Minerva who knew everything and had been everywhere? Then Dick would go. Suddenly she looked up and saw Miss Flora's eyes full of tears. The patties looked as if the sound of a funeral march had just fallen on the soft summer air.

"I thought this was rather too high-toned an affair for us to expect, Miss Trotum J.," said Kitty.

Miss Minerva folded the message slowly, and sat with a sad, thoughtful look in her strong face. She had only learned that an old lady in France was failing very fast; but she had read between the lines. The friend of her youth had only said she was failing fast. Miss Minerva saw, "Come, if it is possible."

She recalled the days when they went to school together; those days when her fierce heart and fearless tongue were always leading her into difficulty; and it was this same friend who was always near, at the right time, with the right word gently spoken. Was it not she who begged Miss Minerva not to forget her native land, and urged her to return and look upon the little princess? Patient and helpless, unable to come back and breathe once more ~~near~~ native air, yet urging her friend to leave her, and do some

good in America. Miss Minerva told them this and much more, and ended by suddenly saying, "What do you say, all of you?"

"Of course you will go," said Miss Flora dismally; "didn't you tell us at Miss Tucker's to always stand by each other?"

"When we old ones are all dead," said Kitty, "and Trot wears a wig and gold spectacles, perhaps Dolly will have to leave her grandchildren to go to Bombay to see Trot."

"She is bound to do it," said Dick, "if Trot sends for her."

"Oh! hush," said Patty solemnly.

"No, no," said Miss Minerva absently; "keep them merry, Kitty."

"I had no idea of hushing," said Kitty.

"I shall go to her," declared Miss Minerva suddenly. "I shall go and show her Dick and the princess."

"A fine sight we are," said Her Royal Highness. Her merry laugh was cut short by reproachful glances cast at her from the little group, and it died suddenly, like a bright spark when it meets the water. "I never was so selfish before," she said softly; "I forgot everybody and everything but going."

"I for one despise you," said Kitty; "and I believe we all do."

"Why, no, indeed!" said Patty, who had not yet learned to appreciate jokes.

"Now, Patty, you know you are just as envious as you can be!" cried Kitty, without a smile; "and didn't you say you hoped that something would happen to keep Princess from going?"

"Why, I never said it in this world, Kitty Jackson! I said I hoped something would happen so she would be with us."

"What is the difference?" asked Dick, enjoying Patty's confusion.

"I don't know as it sounds as if there was any difference," said Patty, "but there is."

"Of course there is," said the princess. She had risen, and was going in answer to a beck from her grandfather who had left them as soon as he had found out the nature of the telegram. She was glad to leave them for a while, and walk beside him, for the disappointment they could not hide seemed to her something like a reproach.

"This is a very valuable place, I should judge," said the grandfather, as they walked towards the water; "I have not seen it for many years."

"Valuable?" she repeated, for she had not thought of it in that light. "It is beautiful; and do you know, Grandpa, if I had not been going away I should have thought it was the most beautiful place in the world."

"Do you think you shall go away?" He spoke as if it was the first time he had heard that she was going.

"What made you ask that?" she said, laughing. "Don't you think I shall go?"

"Yes, yes," he said musingly; "perhaps, perhaps."

"Do you see that boat way off there?" She pointed across the water. "Next week you will watch me go out of sight like that boat. I have bought a book, and some of the pages are marked Grandma, some Grandpa, and some Cousin Minerva, and some Flora, and some Dick; every thing I see that you would like I shall write down on your page; everything Grandma likes on hers. Now I shall not have to write anything for Cousin Minerva or Dick. It seems as if everything was happening just as I want it. I believe next you and Grandma will go, too."

They seated themselves on some broad rocks ; the grandfather raised his gold-headed cane slowly towards his lips, and bent his proud head a little as if he had some idea of kissing the cane, but said nothing.

“Wouldn’t that be the best thing that could happen? Couldn’t we have a good time, all of us seeing beautiful places, and strange people — the kind in the pictures Cousin brought home? Think, all of us together, you know, going everywhere ! ”

Her imagination, strong as it appeared to be, was not able to carry the grandfather far ; she felt this, and, resting her hand lightly upon his arm, looked wistfully into his face.

For a few minutes there was only the regular sound of the waves breaking gently at their feet. Then the grandfather turned over a little flat stone with his cane, and said, “Princess, your grandmother had many children once, as you probably know ; but they all died — all of them — and she was left alone. Then your father was born, and he has never left her. He would never leave this country for fear his going might kill his mother. Now it is necessary that he should go.” The grandfather spoke with great dignity, weighing each word carefully. She sighed gently, and turned her eyes towards the beautiful boat that was fast passing out of sight. “Is it necessary that you should go also, little maid ? ”

“Little maid.” It was the nearest approach he ever made to an affectionate expression. She had caught his meaning before his question came. No, they could not all go! And it was possible that he wanted her to stay at home. Her grandmother had not even hinted that she wished it. It was all she had thought of for a long time. It was the first strong desire she had ever



THEY SEATED THEMSELVES ON SOME BROAD ROCKS.

known, and it had filled her little heart ; now her grandfather had coolly asked, " Is it necessary that you should go ? "

" I should think it was very necessary," she said, laughing, but not very merrily.

" It will be very quiet for your grandmother if Minerva — and — and the boy both go."

" Grandmother doesn't think so ; everybody wants me to go — but — but you, Grandpa ! "

She felt that she was unjust ; that her grandfather was not thinking of himself, but her temptation was very strong.

" Does Minerva's land run to the water ? " he asked, rising, and looking about as if he thought of making an offer for the place.

" I don't know, sir," she answered absently, and they walked back to the house in silence.

In the morning the little party had started out very happy ; on their return no one had anything to say save Kitty and Dick.

Kitty declared she thought it downright shabby to look so cross when nobody was to blame in the least. " As for plans," she said, " I never make any ; people ought not to make plans."

" That's so," said Dick, who planned from sunrise to sunset.

The patties were solemnly silent. Now and then Cora laughed at Kitty, and Rose smiled in a ladylike manner.

The princess kept wondering why she should think of those little children who died so long ago : so long ago that she always thought of them when she thought of the pictures of her great-grandfather and grandmother. But that was wrong, for they were really the grandmother's children. " But it was before papa was born," she thought cheerfully ; why should her grandfather think of them when she spoke of sailing away for the summer ?

When they returned, the grandmother sat at the open window, sewing on her traveling dress, and the princess said, "Have you been lonesome, Grandma?"

"It has been very quiet all day," she said with a smile.

"Very quiet." The words her grandfather had used.

"I suppose Grandpa Nelson told you that Miss Minerva and I had to go," said Dick, in a business way.

"I knew Cousin Minerva would go; I am glad, for I shall feel safer to have Princess go — but must the boy go, too, Minerva?"

She looked really distressed. Had she grown so fond of "the boy"?

"Pretty small for us all to go and leave you," said Dick, "but I should die if Miss Minerva left me; I wouldn't go and leave her, if everybody else in the town went."

"Stop your nonsense," said his guardian.

"I wouldn't; come, now, did I want to go for one minute till you said you were going? Be square now, Miss Minerva."

"How do I know what you were longing and wishing for?" she said, with a queer smile.

"You're not square! Grandma Nelson, don't I always come right out if I want anything? Do I mope, and say nothing about it?"

"No, Dick, you don't," said the grandmother. "I believe what you say, and so does Miss Minerva. But I hoped you would stay with me. Many years ago, Dick, these old rooms were full of children; but they went away, one by one, oh! so quickly, until I was left all alone; then the princess' father was born, and I was frightened if he went out of my sight. He grew up contented and happy, always near me. When he married the princess' mother, I

did not lose my son, I gained a daughter. She, too, my boy, was not for me" — The grandmother's words came now with an effort: "Now Jack must go; I am willing, and it is right Princess should go and be happy with her new mother for a little time; but it leaves the house very lonely, my dear boy. I cannot bear to think of it as it used to be before Princess came. I was often hard upon you when you first came, but we understand each other now, my boy, and" — Her voice trembled a little, but she smiled, and there were no tears in her eyes.

"No, Grandma, no," said Her Royal Highness slowly, as if talking in her sleep; "I know just what you are going to say; you must not say it to Dick; you shall not say it to any one but me. You must not ask him to stay — because — I am not going."

She smiled, too, as she spoke, but the warm color had left her cheeks. "Now please don't say any more about it," she added, a little more as if she were waking up. "Grandpa wants me to stay, and I have made up my mind."

"Fudge and nonsense!" said Miss Minerva. "Is a summer a lifetime?"

"What is the matter with me, Miss Minerva?" said Dick. "I can't say I will stay."

"Because it is not for you to say, any more than it is for the princess."

There is an ugly beast lurking about everybody's home at all times, well known to the smallest child, as well as to the oldest man or woman; always waiting to enter, yet seldom looked for or expected. His name is Disappointment. Never receive him with too many harsh words, or too many bitter tears, for he may be always God-sent.

The Princess had caught sight of his ugly nose as she sat by the water with her grandfather. But she would not look at him. Now he had come straight up to her, and said, "See me; I am old Disappointment!" It was no use to shut her eyes; there he was by her side. He followed her into her chamber, and she closed and locked the door. Whatever she had done, she could not have surprised him, he had been received in so many different ways. Have you not received him yourself, many, many times? Sometimes he is very small, and can be laughed away. To Her Royal Highness he came very, very large. She did not believe at first she could possibly receive him at all.

"I am not going," she said gently, in a surprised tone, after she had locked the door. Upon the bed lay the pretty red book, in which, only the night before, she had written the names of those she wished particularly to remember. There it lay, with all its blank pages. She opened it, and slowly turned the leaves. "For Grandmamma," was written at the top of nearly half the pages. She was thinking how many things she had hoped to write there; happy and bright things to make the grandmother laugh. Now the tears were falling, just as if they were the bright things that the white pages were made for.

"Let me in!" cried a voice at the door.

"Go away, if you please," she said.

"But I don't please; I want to see you."

"I don't want you — this minute."

"I will wait."

"I wish you would go away."

"I won't." Down dropped something like a huge hound at the door. "I shall stay here until you open the door."

"Very well."

"No, it isn't very well; it's pretty mean to keep me sitting here on the floor."

"Go away, then."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I want to be a martyr, too."

"If you will go and ask Cousin Minerva to come here I will let you in."

"She is up in my room looking over my good clothes."

"Please ask her to come."

"You will surely let me in if I get her?"

"I don't care. Didn't I say I would?"

He brought his guardian, and when the door opened he cried, "See, Miss Minerva, I knew she was crying."

"No, I am not crying," said the princess in a firm voice; "I want to know, Cousin, if you can use my ticket for Dick?"

"I shall not," said Miss Minerva.

"Then I must wait till papa comes."

"He is down-stairs now," exclaimed Dick, impatient to learn the princess' plans; "I'll bring him up."

"What is all this about, Your Royal Highness?" said her father, who had followed Dick two stairs at a time. "Your grandmother says you have misunderstood her, and things are a trifle mixed up."

"I cannot go, papa, unless Grandma goes."

"Your Royal Highness should have thought of that before."

"I did not know it until to-day, papa."

"Your grandmother has taken a great deal of trouble that you

may have everything suitable — your ticket is bought, and there is a parting in the pocket-book where I have put some money especially for you. Will Your Royal Highness tell me what I am to do with that money?"

"Yes, papa; that is just what I want to talk about, but I don't want Grandma to hear. All the money that you would spend for me — will you take it for somebody else?"

"For somebody else! What do you mean?" said Miss Minerva; "I shall take care of Dick."

"And if papa will give you my money will you say that you will take Flora with you instead of me? Will you say so, Cousin? The doctor told Tristesse that Flora ought to go away somewhere this summer. I did not notice that she looked sick, because I was only thinking about going away myself, and" —

"But, Princess," interrupted her father, "I have waited many years to go; I hope you will not forget my claim upon you when you are looking out for everybody else."

"I try to remember that, papa, that you waited so long, for it helps me to wait. Grandma told me how good you were — I — I don't know how I ever thought I could go and leave her. Dick would not leave Cousin Minerva; he would not think of such a thing."

"Nobody offered him the chance," said Miss Minerva.

"I might just as well be a pig and done with it," sighed Dick; "I never get credit for anything."

His guardian pulled his ear until it was quite red. This must have been some acknowledgment of his good behavior, for he nodded, and went off to the grandmother apparently well satisfied.

"Grandma Nelson, she means it!"

"Dick, what did I say? Did any one think I meant it for her? Do you suppose I would spoil her pleasure? I meant it for you; I wanted to keep you! It was all settled that she should go. Why, of course," she added cheerfully, "her ticket is bought."

"She won't go, Grandma Nelson."

"She must go, Dick."

CHAPTER XXXII.

GOOD-BY, LITTLE PRINCESS.

THE great steamer was moving away. The good-bys would never have all been said if it had waited until now to start; so it wrencheded itself away with a groan, and a line of green water glistened between the wharf and the black hull.

The princess saw it, standing on the carriage step with her hand in the grandmother's. Her father saw it, and involuntarily reached out his arms toward her. Her new mother saw it, and lowered her veil and let the tears come as fast as they pleased.

Miss Minerva appeared as unmoved as a poplar, with Miss Flora clinging on one side, and Dick on the other, rubbing his eyes as if the clear June air was full of smoke.

"O dear me!" groaned Miss Flora. "Just think, I said she was selfish to go away and leave me!"

"She is not crying," said Dick; "look at her; she is waving her handkerchief!"

Miss Flora groaned again, and said, "Is papa crying; can you see, Dick?"

"No; he is grinning, and so is Kitty."

"He is crying inside," she said, wiping away her tears hastily, that she might not lose sight of him for a moment; "how good he is!"

Mr. Hill had been the last one to leave the boat.

Dick had torn the fly-leaf from the pretty red journal the princess had given him, and had written a farewell message after Her Royal Highness had gone ashore, and Mr. Hill was commissioned to give it to her after the boat was out of sight.

Now he stood with Kitty, for they had both promised that everything should go off, without a wail. They had tied large handkerchiefs on sun-umbrellas, and they waved them with little regard to the people about them.

Kitty's smile was as broad as they had ever seen it. Miss Minerva and Dick could see her white teeth glisten in the sun. "I promised Miss Minerva I would keep a big smile on," she said, "until they were quite out of sight, and I must do it if it kills me."

"I never will tell of the sun showers," said Mr. Hill, as a tear rolled down her cheek.

"Can you see them now, Princess?" asked the grandmother, looking out the carriage.

"Yes, Grandma; papa is watching us, and — and mamma has put her veil down. Flora is crying. Her papa is here and mine is going with her. Isn't it queer the way things happen, Grandma?"

"And you are brave enough to be happy, Princess, when you must stay behind with an old woman like me."

"It is just as I want it, truly, Grandma."

The grandmother's thin fingers closed tightly over the plump little hand that lay in hers, but she said nothing.

"It is bad taste to go traveling about foreign countries before you have seen your own," said the grandfather. "You shall see your own country first, little maid," and the grandfather ran his

eye along the coast line of his own country as far as he could see, with a proud smile.

The princess was not thinking of traveling anywhere just then. The great steamer was fast moving out of sight, and she could not help crying out, "O, my papa!"

"Cry all you want now," said Kitty, coming up to the carriage; "they can't see."

"I am afraid you have not been quite true to your promise, Miss Kitty," said the grandmother, smiling through tears.

"Oh! I have, Mrs. Nelson; I never enjoyed anything more in my life. I have a good mind to let myself out as a good-byist. In some countries they have hired mourners to cry for people; why not hire people to laugh for you when you don't feel quite like it yourself?"

"But your eyes look a little bit wet, Kitty," said the princess.

"It is a new business for me, and I can't look across the water very long at a time, but after a little while I could do it."

Down by Miss Minerva's old house there stood another little group, with a great spy-glass, watching for the ocean steamer.

The patties' quiet disappointment on the day the telegram came had not escaped Miss Minerva's notice. That very evening she had sent Dick to their house with a bunch of keys and the offer of the big house for the summer.

"You must not get any tears on Miss Minerva's spy-glass," said Dolly severely, taking the glass from Polly, who was vainly looking for Miss Flora, with her glass turned towards the clouds.

Polly meekly wiped the glass and aimed it at some rocks.

"Can you see her?" asked M'randy, looking wishfully at the glass.

"Why, no," said Patty; "she can't see anything yet; the steamer isn't in sight yet. You shall look just as soon as it comes."

M'randy sat down again upon the sand with her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands, and looked across the water.

"Now, ma, I want to tell you all about Kitty," said Patty, taking her mother aside; "I went to tell her about our having the house and wanting her to come, and she said she wanted to come for a little while, and so did Trot. I said of course, and she said, 'We shall pay a little board, Patty, because you are not rich.' I said, 'No, indeed,' and she said, 'But I will!' Then I said, 'But you are not very rich either,' and she said, 'Mercy, Patty! how did you find that out?' Then she laughed, and said, 'I suppose it is no use for me to try to put on any airs, and I had better tell you that Miss Minerva told me I'd better pay board, and gave me the money.' Do you hear, ma! Gave her the money! gave it to her!"

"She is too good! Why, Patty, what should we have done! we shall have so little this summer. We should have had to tell Kitty the truth."

"And it would have looked as if we were so stingy, ma. I told her we were trying to pay off the mortgage."

"What did she say?"

"She laughed."

"Laughed?"

"Yes; she said it sounded funny to have only one mortgage."

"Poor child! Kitty has seen some pretty hard times, I believe, Patty."

"Come!" cried Dolly. The steamer was in sight, and there was a general demand for the glass.

"Can you see her?" moaned M'randy.

"We can't see anybody so far away," said the patties' mother.

"Only can see the ship?" asked M'randy.

"Perhaps you can see the people, but not to tell them apart," said Patty. "You can't tell Miss Minerva from Miss Tucker — Mrs. Nelson, I mean."

"Will she look like Miss Minerva through that?" said M'randy indignantly.

"Why, certainly," said Patty patiently; "it is too far to really see how they look."

M'randy turned away without a word, and walked to the end of a long ledge of rocks that ran into the water, and, standing there with her hat in hand, watched alone. There was neither gratitude nor regret in her dull face, but, could her kind and beautiful mistress have seen her, she would have been satisfied.

"I think I can see Dick," said Patty, handing the glass to her mother.

"I see a lot of people, that's all," said her mother, giving back the glass; "I can't tell a man from a woman."

"I know that is Miss Minerva; look quick, Polly," said Patty. "She is standing with Dick on one side and Flora on the other."

Polly lost a moment looking through the wrong end of the glass, but Dolly said it didn't make any difference anyway; Polly's eyes were so full of tears she couldn't see anything.

"Flora said she would wave a red scarf when she went by," said Polly.

"I see her waving it," said Dolly.

"What a story," sobbed Polly.

"And there is Dick going up the mast."

"Now, Dolly, you know you are telling stories," cried Polly.

"And there is the captain bowing to ma," said Dolly.

"I wish I could see Miss Minerva," said the mother; "she has been so kind to us."

"Try once more, ma," urged Patty; "I am sure I saw her."

"No use, dear; I can't even see the people now."

The great steamer grew smaller and smaller until it appeared like a speck, then suddenly disappeared.

"They went to the edge of the world and then tumbled over," said Dolly.

At this very moment Mr. Hill was handing the princess a crumpled paper. It was the fly-leaf of the red journal. Her Royal Highness smoothed it carefully, and as she read she laughed merrily. So it happened that she was, in truth, laughing when the great steamer passed from the sight of the last watchers.

"What is it?" said the grandmother. And the princess read:





